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YALE

LECTURES ON PREACHING.

BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE THEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT OF YALE COLLEGE, NEW HAVEN, CONN., IN THE REGULAR COURSE OF THE "LYMAN BEECHER LECTURESHIP ON PREACHING."

FIRST SECOND, AND THIRD SERIES.

Three Volumes in One.

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1900.

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FIRST SERIES.

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LECTURES ON PREACHING.

FIRST SERIES.

THE PERSONAL ELEMENTS

WHICH BEAR AN IMPORTANT RELATION TO PREACHING.

LETTER.

THEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT, YALE COLLEGE,
Feb. 23, 1872.

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

DEAR SIR, — Allow us to express our high estimation of the Lectures on Preaching given by you in the Marquand Chapel to the students of this Department. We value them for the views which they give of eloquence in general, and of that eloquence in particular which seeks to save men by the exposition and application of the gospel. We value them for their stimulating and inspiring effect on the hearers, and for the high ideal which they hold up before ministers and students for the ministry. We cannot but hope that in some form of publication they will have a wider usefulness, not only among students preparing for the ministry, but among preachers of the gospel in all the churches. It is with great satisfaction that we look forward to the enjoyment of other courses from you in successive years.

The Lyman Beecher Lectureship which was founded by your parishioner, Mr. Sage, and of which you are so fitly the incumbent, promises to exceed in usefulness our highest expectations.

Yours truly,

LEONARD BACON,
(*Lecturer on Church Polity, etc.*)
SAMUEL HARRIS,
(*Prof. of Systematic Theology.*)
GEORGE E. DAY,
(*Prof. of Hebrew and Biblical Theology.*)
JAMES M. HOPPIN,
(*Prof. of Homiletics and the Pastoral Charge.*)
GEORGE P. FISHER,
(*Prof. of Ecclesiastical History.*)
TIMOTHY DWIGHT,
(*Prof. of Sacred Literature.*)

PREFACE.

IN 1871, Mr. Henry W. Sage, of Brooklyn, New York, contributed the funds necessary to found a Lectureship on Preaching in the Divinity School at Yale College, New Haven, Conn. In honor of my father, it was styled the LYMAN BEECHER LECTURESHIP ON PREACHING. As this title implies, it was the design of the donor and of the Theological Faculty to secure a more perfect preparation of young men for preaching, as the highest act of the Christian ministry, by providing for them, in addition to their general and professional studies, a course of practical instruction in the art of preaching, to be given by those actively engaged in the practice of it. At the request of both the Founder and the Theological Faculty, I consented to serve as Lecturer in this course for three consecutive years.

Since each class, however, passes through a three-years' course, it was deemed desirable that the lectures

should not be condensed into a single course of twelve, to be repeated in substance each year, but that they should be so enlarged and divided as to give to each year its separate and distinct topics. I have therefore considered in this, the first year, chiefly the personal elements which bear an important relation to preaching.

The second year will deal with the auxiliary forces and external implements by which the preacher prepares the way for the sermon, or gathers up its fruit: the conduct of public service, of prayer-meetings, and of social gatherings of every kind; the function of music in public worship; the methods of dealing with new fields of labor; the direction of church-work in old communities, — in short, a consideration of social and religious machinery as connected with preaching.

I purpose to discuss during the third year the method of using Christian doctrines, in their relations to individual dispositions and to the wants of communities.

It will therefore be seen that this volume contains only one division of the whole course of lectures.

The discourses here given were wholly unwritten, and were familiar conversational addresses, rather than elaborate speeches. The phonographic report of the lecture on "Sermon-Making," when prepared for the press, unaccountably disappeared, and was never regained. I was obliged to dictate a new lecture in

the best way I could. Those who heard the course may by this circumstance explain the difference between what they read and what they remember to have heard.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Brooklyn, N. Y., June, 1872.

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Lectures on Preaching.

I.

WHAT IS PREACHING?

January 31, 1872.

I DO not propose, in the few lectures which I shall give in this place, and which hardly deserve to be dignified by the name of lectures, to make them other than familiar conversations.

This Lectureship is not to be confounded with a regular Professorship of pastoral theology. Such a professorship is already founded in your Divinity School, and amply and ably served. This lectureship is an auxiliary to it; but even that only in one regard, namely, the element of *Preaching*.

When one takes charge of a parish he assumes the care of several departments, which, though intimately related, are yet in nature quite distinct. In his social relations, visiting from house to house, he is a pastor. In the management of the affairs of the church, the appointment and conduct of the subordinate meetings, he is an administrator, or more like what in civil government is termed an executive. But besides this, he is to

teach and inspire men from the platform or pulpit; and that is what we mean distinctively by Preaching. The design of this lectureship is not to supersede the instructions given already by the incumbent of the chair of Pastoral Theology, but to intensify one portion of his teachings by bringing in from the field those who are actively engaged in the work of preaching, that you may derive from them the results of their observation and experience. For I believe that it is the wish and purpose of this Institution to send out *preachers*, — not merely good managers, good pastors, but good *preachers*.

THE SCOPE OF PREACHING.

A preacher is a teacher; but he is more. A teacher brings before men a given view, or a department of truth. He expends his force upon facts or ideas. But a preacher assumes or proves facts and truths as a vehicle through which he may bring his spirit to bear upon men. A preacher looks upon truth from the constructive point of view. He looks beyond mere knowledge to the character which that knowledge is to form. It is not enough that men shall *know*. They must *be*. Every stroke of his brush must bring out some element of the likeness to Christ which he is seeking to produce. He is an artist, — not of forms and matter, but of the soul. Every sermon is like the stroke of Michael Angelo's chisel, and the hidden figure emerges at every blow. A teacher has doubtless an ulterior reference to practical results; but the preacher, not indifferent to remote and indirect results, aims at the immediate. "Now! *Now!*" is his inspiration. "Cease to do evil, at once. Turn toward good immediately. Add strength to every excel-

lence, and virtue to virtue, now and continually." The effect of his speech upon the souls of men is his objective. It is this moral fruit in men's souls for which he plants his truth, as so much seed.

Change the illustration and adopt the architectural figure so much employed by the Apostle Paul, of rearing a building. When a master-builder goes to the forest for material, he does not take trees of any and every kind, and then put them together at haphazard, or so as to accommodate his building to the form of the trees. The trees must conform to the house that is to be. The builder carries in his eye the future house, and selects his trees from the wood by the known wants of the house; this one for a sill, that one for a corner-post, others for beams, and so on. Thus all truths, all sermons, are merely subordinate material and instruments; the preacher's real end is to be found in the soul-building that is going on. He is an artist of living forms, of invisible colors; an architect of a house not built with hands — Jesus Christ, the foundation.

There is another element which discriminates a preacher from a teacher. Moral truths may become personal, as physical or scientific truths cannot. Number, weight, dimension, have no relation to a speaker's personal feelings or those of his hearers; but hope, fear, joy, love, faith, have. A preacher is in some degree a reproduction of the truth in personal form. The truth must exist in him as a living experience, a glowing enthusiasm, an intense reality. The Word of God in the Book is a dead letter. It is paper, type, and ink. In the preacher that word becomes again as it was when first spoken by prophet, priest, or apostle. It springs up in him

as if it were first kindled in his heart, and he were moved by the Holy Ghost to give it forth. He *is* so moved.

The preacher is one who is aiming directly at the ennobling of his hearer. He seeks to do this partly by the use of truth existing as a philosophy or by ordinary facts, but yet more by giving to such truth the glow and color and intensity which are derived from his own soul. If one may so say, he digests the truth and makes it personal, and then brings his own being to bear upon that of his hearers. All true preaching bears the impress of the nature of the preacher. "Christ in you." The truth is that which is represented in the historical Jesus Christ, but it is that truth "*in you*," or as it exists in each man's distinctive personality, which must make it a living force.

Of course, in such a view, all preaching is to find its criterion of merit in the work performed in men's hearts, and not in any ideal excellence of the sermon. The sermon is only a tool, and the work which is accomplished by it is to measure its value. No man is to preach for the sake of the sermon, nor for the sake of "the truth," nor for the sake of any "system of truth"; but for the sake of the hearts and lives of the men that listen to his words. How aimlessly does he preach who has no thought of men, but who sympathizes only with his own cogitations! How yet more foolish is he who has a certain round of topics which he calls his "system," and which he serves out almost mechanically to meet his contract with the society which employs him!

It is hardly an imaginary case to describe one as ap-

proaching the Sabbath day somewhat in this way: "O dear me, I have got to preach! I have beat out pretty much all there is in that straw, and I wonder what I shall preach on next"; and so the man takes the Bible and commences to turn over the leaves, hoping that he will hit something. He looks up and down, and turns forward and backward, and finally he does see a light, and he says, "I can make something interesting from that." Interesting, why? For what purpose? What, under heaven, but that he is a salaried officer expected to preach twice on Sunday, and to lecture or hold the prayer-meeting in the middle of the week; and the time has come round when, like a clock, it is his business to strike, and so he does strike, just as ignorantly as the hammer strikes upon the bell! He is following out no intelligent plan. He is a perfunctory preacher, doing a duty because appointed to that duty.

What would you think of a physician in the household who has been called to minister to a sick member of some family, and who says, "Well, I will leave something or other; I don't know; what shall I leave?" and he looks in his saddle-bags to see what he has yet got the most of, and prescribes it with no directions; the father, mother, and children may all take a little, and the servants may have the rest. Another physician, and a true one, comes, and the mother says, "Doctor, I have called you in to prescribe for my child." He sits down and studies the child's symptoms; traces them back to the supposed cause; reflects how he shall hit that case, what remedial agents are supposed to be effective, what shall be the form of administration, how often; he considers the child's temperament and age,

and adapts himself to the special necessity of the individual case.

Do you suppose a man can deal with so subtile a thing as the human soul without any thought, skill, sagacity in adaptation; can take a sermon and throw its contents over the congregation, and let everybody pick out of it what he can find, — each man left to take his share? Can this be done in a ministry and accomplish any good? Yes, in God's providence, some good is done even in this way. Paul said that the "foolishness of preaching" would do a great deal of good; and there is so much foolish preaching that it would be strange if some of it did not do some good, here or there.

THE PAULINE METHOD.

But preaching must come back to what it was in the apostolic times. It must come back to the conditions under which those men were so eminent for their success in winning souls. If you want to be a preacher to your fellows, you must become a "*fisher of men*," — your business is to catch them. The preacher's task is first to arouse; secondly, on that aroused moral condition to build, and continue building until he has completed the whole. The thing that a preacher aims at all the while is *reconstructed manhood*, a nobler idea in his congregation of how people ought to live and what they ought to be. To be sure, you will find in the New Testament that there is a great deal more in the preaching of the Apostles than this. There was a great deal that was incidental; a great deal that belonged to the extrication of Christians from the Jewish thraldom; a great deal that belonged to the peculiarities of the time,

and which can be transferred to our time by adapting, not adopting. If you will look through the New Testament with your eye on that point, you will find that Paul — the greatest of all preachers, I take it — aimed all the way through, and certainly Peter, in his famous sermon on the day of Pentecost, aimed, at reconstructed manhood. Consider attentively Paul's idea of the work of Christian ministers, as given in his letter to the Ephesian assembly of Christians (Eph. iv. 11–16, inclusive). The end, Manhood. The means, Truth. The spirit, Love. The ideal, Christ. The inspiration, the living Spirit of God!

This being the aim of true preaching, there is but one question more to be added; that is, by what instrument, by what influence, are you to reach it? The ideal of a true Christian preacher — I do not mean that no man is a Christian preacher who does not live up to this ideal, for we are all imperfect, but the ideal toward which every man should strive — is this, to take the great truths of the Lord Jesus Christ's teachings, and the love of God to the human race, and make them a part of his own personal experience, so that when he speaks to men it shall not be he alone that speaks, but God in him. To quote texts to men is good for some purposes; but that is not preaching. If it were, then you would better read the Bible altogether, without note or comment, to men. The reason why reading the truths that are just as plainly stated there has sometimes so much less effect than stating them in your own way, is that the truth will gain a force when it becomes a part of you that it would not have when merely read as a text.

Look, for instance, at what Paul did when he preached. He was consumed with the love of Christ. He was made restless with the intensity of his feeling; and wherever he went he did not preach Christ as John would. He did not preach Christ as Peter would. He preached Christ as Christ had been revealed to him and in him. It was the Pauline conception of the Lord Jesus Christ that Paul preached.

You may say that Christ is one and the same, and whoever preaches him, it must be substantially the same thing. You might just as well say that the sun is one and the same, and that therefore whatever flower shows the sun's work must look the same; but when you look at the flowers you will see some red, some blue, some yellow, some humble, some high, some branching. Endless is the work the sun creates; but every one of the things which it creates, reflects its power and teaches something about it. It takes the experience of a thousand men brought into one ideal, to make up the conception of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may read what Paul wrote about him, you may read what was written by John or Peter or James or Matthew, and the impression produced by either of these is fragmentary; it is presenting some things out of the infinite; and it cannot produce a conception of the infinite in the minds of men.

When under the gospel men are made preachers, God works in them a saving knowledge of himself, gives them a sense of the sympathy between God and man, of the spiritual love which appeals from the infinite to the mortal; and then says to them, "Take this revelation of Jesus Christ in you, and go out and preach

it." Tell what God has done for your soul, not in a technical way, but in a large way; take the truth revealed in you, and according to the structure of your understanding, your emotive affections, the sentiments of your own soul, filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, go and preach to men for the sake of making them know the love of Christ Jesus, and you will have a power in you to make that preaching effective. There is a place for knowledge, purely as such; but that which you want to effect is, from the consciousness of your own nature to describe the love of God, not in the abstract conception, but experimentally, just as it has been felt by you, so as to produce a longing for the love of God in your hearers. It will be imperfect. There are no perfect preachers in the world. The only perfect men in this world are the Doctors of Divinity, who teach systematic theology. They know everything, all of it, and I envy them. But men that preach take only so much of the truth as they can hold, and, generally speaking, preachers don't hold a great deal. They are all partialists.

One of the most beautiful things I read in the life of Paul is in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians, in which, when he has expressed his raptures in giving the everlasting exposition of love, he says: "After all, we are only fragmentary creatures; we only see bits and spots; now we see through a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face; now I know in part, I know only portions of things, but then shall I know as I am known." He felt how empty he was; and yet what a creature was that Paul! What a magnificent moving spirit the man was! But when he spoke about him-

self in that epistle, written late in his life, he felt that he was not a full man; that he could not represent or reflect the whole of the Lord Jesus Christ. No man can. No hundred men can. It is your office as preachers to take so much of the truth of Christ Jesus as has become digested and assimilated into your own spiritual life, and with that, strike! with that, flash! with that, burn men!

A BIT OF EXPERIENCE.

I remember the first sermon I ever preached. I had preached a good many sermons before, too. But I remember the first real one. I had preached a good while as I had used my gun. I used to go out hunting by myself, and I had great success in firing off my gun; and the game enjoyed it as much as I did, for I never hit them or hurt them. I fired off my gun as I see hundreds of men firing off their sermons. I loaded it, and bang! — there was a smoke, a report, but nothing fell; and so it was again and again. I recollect one day in the fields my father pointed out a little red squirrel, and said to me, "Henry, would you like to shoot him?" I trembled all over, but I said, "Yes." He got down on his knee, put the gun across a rail, and said, "Henry, keep perfectly cool, perfectly cool; take aim." And I did, and I fired, and over went the squirrel, and he did n't run away either. That was the first thing I ever hit; and I felt an inch taller, as a boy that had killed a squirrel, and knew how to aim a gun.

I had preached two years and a half at Lawrenceburg, in Indiana, (and some sporadic sermons before that,) when I went to Indianapolis. While there I was

very much discontented. I had been discontented for two years. I had expected that there would be a general public interest, and especially in the week before the communion season. In the West we had protracted meetings, and the people would come up to a high point of feeling; but I never could get them beyond that. They would come down again, and there would be no conversions. I sent for Dr. Stowe to come down and help me; but he would not come, for he thought it better for me to bear the yoke myself. When I had lived at Indianapolis the first year, I said: "There was a reason why when the apostles preached they succeeded, and I will find it out if it is to be found out." I took every single instance in the Record, where I could find one of their sermons, and analyzed it and asked myself: "What were the circumstances? who were the people? what did he do?" and I studied the sermons until I got this idea: That the apostles were accustomed first to feel for a ground on which the people and they stood together; a common ground where they could meet. Then they heaped up a large number of the particulars of knowledge that belonged to everybody; and when they had got that knowledge, which everybody would admit, placed in a proper form before their minds, then they brought it to bear upon them with all their excited heart and feeling. That was the first definite idea of taking aim that I had in my mind.

"Now," said I, "I will make a sermon so." I remember it just as well as if it were yesterday. First, I sketched out the things we all know. "You all know you are living in a world perishing under your feet. You all know that time is extremely uncertain; that

you cannot tell whether you will live another month or week. You all know that your destiny, in the life that is to come, depends upon the character you are forming in this life"; and in that way I went on with my "You all knows," until I had about forty of them. When I had got through that, I turned round and brought it to bear upon them with all my might; and there were seventeen men awakened under that sermon. I never felt so triumphant in my life. I cried all the way home. I said to myself: "Now I know how to preach."

I could not make another sermon for a month that was good for anything. I had used all my powder and shot on that one. But, for the first time in my life, I had got the idea of taking aim. I soon added to it the idea of analyzing the people I was preaching to, and so taking aim for specialties. Of course that came gradually and later, with growing knowledge and experience.

Young man, when you get a parish, don't be discouraged for the first ten years, no matter how poor your work. There is no trade that requires so long an apprenticeship as preaching; and yet there is no trade to which they admit a man so soon, or in which he learns so fast. It is easier to study law and become a successful practitioner, it is easier to study medicine and become a successful practitioner, than it is to study the human soul all through, — to know its living forms, and to know the way of talking to it, and coming into sympathy with it. To make the truths of God and the Divine influences a part of your daily, enthusiastic experience, and to bring to bear out of

your treasury what is needed here or there, — that requires a great deal of experience, and a great deal of study.

THE POWER OF PERSONAL CHRISTIAN VITALITY.

This living force, then, of the human soul, brought to bear upon living souls, for the sake of their transformation, being the fundamental idea, I think it will be interesting to you for me to state more at large the fact that not only was this the Apostolic idea of preaching, but it was the secret of the power of the first Christian Church for many hundred years. It is historically true that Christianity did not in its beginning succeed by the force of its doctrines, but by the *lives* of its disciples. It succeeded first as a light; in accordance with the Master's command, "Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." Make religion attractive by the goodness that men see in you; be so sweet, so sparkling, so buoyant, so cheerful, hopeful, courageous, conscientious and yet not stubborn, so perfectly benevolent and yet not mawkish or sentimental; blossoming in everything that is good, a rebuke to everything that is mean or little, — make such men of yourselves that everybody who looks upon you may say, "That is a royal good fellow; he has the spirit that I should like to lean upon in time of trouble, or to be a companion with at all times." Build up such a manhood that it shall be winning to men. That is what the early Christians did.

It was not by doctrinal subtleties that they overcame philosophy. The heathen world found that the

lowest class of people, the people least likely to attain the serious heights of philosophy, were developing traits that neither persecution, neglect, nor opprobrium could change; so that after a while it began to be proverbial, that Christian men were more beautiful livers than anybody else. It was the beauty of Christian life that overcame philosophy, and won the way for Christian doctrine.

Again, we are to seek to preach, not simply by our own personal experience, but by bringing together one and another in the church, and having the whole life of the church so beautiful in the community that it shall be a constant attraction to win men unceasingly to us and our influence. This was what Christ commanded, what the early church did; and the world will be converted, not until the whole body of Christians become in this sense preachers.

SERMONS AND LITURGIES.

In view of the statements I have made, I wish to discriminate between the two great church bodies that exist. We are apt to divide the Christian world into the Protestant and Catholic. I prefer to divide it into the Evangelical and the Hierarchical. They are sharply distinguished by various other things, but by nothing more, it seems to me, than by this, that the Hierarchical body, in all its various forms, relies for its success upon the administration of ordinances and systems of worship; while the Evangelical body relies substantially for its success upon the living force of man upon man. Both hold to the indispensableness of Divine power; but one believes that power to work chiefly through

church *ordinances*, the other believes that it works through *living men*.

Wherever you shall find the altar and the sacrifice; wherever you shall find robes, candles, and liturgies; wherever you shall find piled high instrumentalities of this kind, sermons shrink and sermonizers are fewer and fewer. Where the church looks for power in external forms, preaching tends to decay. On the other hand, where the ordinances are very few, and yet the church has life, the pulpit thrives and waxes strong. The man in the pulpit is the only thing the Presbyterian and Congregationalist have to rely upon; but when you consider that preaching means the power of living men upon living men, you will see that they who have strength in the pulpit have the very heart of the matter.

There is just as much difference between the man who is a mere administrator of ordinances, — which Paul thanked God he had not much to do with, for he had not been sent to baptize but to preach the gospel, and the administration of ordinances with him was one thing and the preaching of the gospel an entirely different thing, — there is just as much difference between the man who administers ordinances and the man who preaches the gospel, as there is between the man who prints a chromo and the man that paints the picture which the chromo prints. The man that strikes out the original plan upon the canvas and brings it to its perfection is an artist. But the man who takes fifteen stones, every stone carrying one color, and from them prints the chromo, may produce a perfect picture, but after all he is nothing but the mechanician, putting the ink on the paper, while the stone does all the work.

The man that preaches with power is an artist. He is a living creature. But the man that merely comes to administer ordinances on Sundays or Saints' days, who goes through a regular routine, is nothing but the engineer who runs the machine.

But does he not do good? Yes; a great deal. Is not the world better with him than it would be without him? Yes; a great deal better. Yet how much better it would be if you could have both, — if the man could be a living creature, to say what he has got in him, and then carry that along, and confirm it, and build it up by institutional influences. Preaching arouses, gathers material, prepares the way; institutions come in to consolidate and keep.

There is a reason why different churches and different men succeed as they do. For example, take a Presbyterian, or an Orthodox Congregational Church, in which the minister is an acute and eminent thinker; he runs all to thought. He will indoctrinate his people, educate them, build them up disproportionately in their minds, and that is about all. Things will stand steadily, grow slowly, and develop but little. Right alongside of him there is a man with strong, emotive, vitalizing life; a man who is not so much after thoughts as he is after the people, or after bait to catch the people with. He means *men*, first, and last, and all the while. Systems, to him, are beautiful if they will act like a net to catch folks, and good for nothing if they do not. High doctrines, to him, are valuable, just in proportion as they give position from which to throw stones upon the besiegers round about. It is power over men that he wants. He is not necessarily less a teacher: but what

a vitality he will give to his church! How strongly it will swell! How it will grow! What an effect it will produce in the community! It is the living force within him that does it. It is the manhood in him; it is the Spirit of God dwelling in him, that is the occasion of such a success.

There is no church, in my experience, more successful than the Methodist Church in the West. I worked beside that church for fifteen years, and saw the whole operation, and knew the men that were in the church. They were not men largely equipped with theology. I knew Elder Havens when he began to preach. He knew so little, had so little culture, that he had to count the chapters to tell what chapter it was, and then count the verses to tell what verse it was; yet afterwards he became no mean scholar. I knew hundreds of men there that were stammerers in learning. Yet, on the whole, they had eminent power. They did no institutional work; but they had zeal, fervor, personal feeling; and by that, little as their knowledge was, small as was the area of the thoughts they brought to bear, they transformed communities. They were real preachers. They had the right idea of preaching, and they succeeded in spite of their ignorance. Their personal experience was very strong, and their feelings were outspoken, demonstrative. They brought to bear the truth of God in their souls upon the masses of mankind, and the effect corresponded to the cause.

GENERAL ADVANTAGES OF DIRECTNESS.

This view also will discriminate between sermons, — those which seek direct effects definitely aimed at, and

those that are institutional sermons. There are sermons for preaching, and there are sermons also for teaching and confirming. I do not say you should not preach these secondary sermons; but if that is the whole style of your ministry, you will not be so successful, although you may slowly advance. Every man ought to preach two kinds of sermons: one for direct power on men's minds and hearts, and the other for their broadening in knowledge; but of this last class, less and less in our time, because the people have so many other sources of knowledge, and so many other training influences are going on in the community.

No man ought to go into the pulpit with the direct kind of sermon without having a definite reason why he selected one subject rather than another, and why he put it in one form rather than another. The old-fashioned way of sermonizing affords us some amusement; but they did a great deal of good with those queer, regulation old methods of first, second, third, and then the subdivisions. I remember that, in my boyhood, the moment a man announced his text, I could tell pretty nearly as well as he could how he would lay it out, because I knew he must proceed according to certain forms.

It seems to me that the highest conception of a sermon is, that it is a prescription which a man has made, either for a certain individual, or for a certain class, or for a certain state of things that he knows to exist in the congregation. It is as much a matter of prescription as the physician's medicine is. For instance, you say, "In my congregation there has been a good deal of affliction, which I think I ought to comfort. Now,

of all ways of comforting, how shall I do it? Shall I show the hand of God in all his administration? What will that do? That mode of consolation will raise people up into the conception of God; but those that cannot rise so high will fall short of it and not get it. Or, I can show them how afflictions will elevate the soul; and that will have another range. Or, it may be that I will not say a word about that, but strike a blow that exhilarates men and lifts them up, independent of any allusion to troubles; I may strike a chord to awaken the courage of men. What subject can I take which will most successfully sound that chord?" And so you look for your subject. You know what you are after the whole time. It is exactly like the watchmaker, who has opened your watch and discovered that something is wrong. He turns to his bench and pokes around among his tools, but cannot find what he wants; he looks everywhere for it, and at last, there it is, and he takes it and uses it, for it is the only instrument exactly fitted to do just the thing he wanted to do in that watch. Now, in preaching to a congregation there are living men to reach; and there is a particular way of doing it that you want to get at. You search for it in the Bible; and you make your sermon to answer the end. This is psychological preaching, drawing from your own gradually augmenting intelligence and experience, which will make you skilful in the ends you want to effect.

MAN-BUILDING, THE PREACHER'S BUSINESS.

I will add only one thing more, for I shall resume this subject; and that is, that I have participated with

a great many in one experience. I have been under the penumbra of doubt. I look upon the progress of physical science and see the undermining influences that are going on. I see that probably churches as they are now constituted will not stand, and that a vast amount of what is called technical theology will have to undergo great mutations. I know there are many minds in the darkness of cloud who ask, Is there a God? or, Is it a Pantheistic God? or, Is there a revelation? Can there be an inspiration in this world? The whole of this reacts on the community, so that a young man who is thinking about preaching may say to himself, "I will not go into a profession which seems likely to be overthrown before long; where, in a few years, all my employment will drop out of my hands, scepticism is prevailing to such an extent."

Young gentlemen, I want to tell you my belief upon that point. True preaching is yet to come. Of all the professions for young men to look forward to, I do not know another one that seems to me to have such scope before it in the future as preaching. I mean this. There is one fact that is not going to be overturned by science; and that is the necessity of human development, and the capability there is in man of being opened up and improved. If there is one thing that can be substantiated more clearly than another, it is that the development indicated by Christianity is right along the line of nature. Men walk from the fleshly up to the spiritual. If there can be one thing shown to be more true than another, it is that Christianity is walking toward spiritual love as the polar star, the grand centre. If there is one thing in this world

more worthy of being worked than another, it is the human soul. And if there is one business better worth a man's thought than another, it is a profession that undertakes to educate men along this common line, of nature and Christianity together, and lift them up from basilar conditions and methods to the coronal heights where understanding, moral sentiment, taste, imagination, and love are intermingled.

That is the business of the preacher. It is not to grind a church. It is not to turn a wheel. It is not to cuff about the controversies of theology. It is a living work, — building-work. If you are to be true preachers, you are to be man-builders; and in the days yet to come there is to be no labor so worthy of a man's ambition as that of building men worthily, that at last you may present them spotless before the throne of God.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Now for questions, if you want to ask any.

Q. In keeping an eye upon the congregation, and looking forward to a ministry which may be for years, would you not think best to follow in the general system of thought which we call Calvinistic? Can we pass by the teachings of the schools and construct our own theology? Or shall we have for a background, for a corner-stone, if you please, of all our systems of thought and preaching, that system which is called Calvinistic?

Mr. Beecher. — I admire the discretion with which you put that question. If you had asked me whether you ought to follow that system which *is* Calvinism, I should say, No. But if you ask whether you ought to follow that system which is *called* Calvinism, I say

it is very well to follow that; for I have noticed what that which is called Calvinism may be defined to be. For instance, I consider myself Calvinistic, you know; and in this way: I believe what John Calvin would have believed if he had lived in my time and seen things as I see them. My first desire is to know what is true; and then I am very glad if John Calvin agrees with me, but if he don't, so much the worse for him! While I accept the work that God did by him in the interpretation and in the systematization of truth, — and I shall have a good deal to say about Calvinism and in favor of Calvinism before I get through, in respect to its doctrines and its historic work, — yet it seems to me that I have the same Lord Jesus Christ that John Calvin had, the same Paul, the same John, and nothing that hinders me in any way from looking right into their hearts and forming my own idea of what they were and how they felt, just as he did; with the additional advantage that I have in the light of hundreds of years' unfolding of the Christian Church which he had not, for he constructed his system under the drippings of the old Roman hierarchy. Besides, John Calvin had an inordinate share of intellect and not half his share of heart. Have I answered sufficiently?

Q. If you were requested to preach on Election and Predestination in a church whose members held the old faith on these points, how would you meet that request?

Mr. Beecher. — I should preach it as I find it in the New Testament. I should not ask the catechisms, which are helps to those whom they help. I should take it as I find it in the New Testament, — that God has a plan in the world; that he works according to

laws ; and that natural laws are divine decrees. I very frankly admit that those truths can be stated in a way so as to be very offensive and discouraging ; but I thankfully believe that they can be stated in another way so as to be the foundation and groundwork of hope and courage. Whatever else you do, don't slam the door of possibility in any man's face. Don't hold up any of the truths of the gospel in such a way that the man who looks at them shall say it is not possible to be saved. The teaching of Christ and the Apostles was that God wanted all men to be saved, and made overtures to them ; that there is a possibility of every man's being regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost. Build up such a spiritual superstructure that every little child shall feel it to be easier to live a Christian life than an ungodly life.

Q. If you went into a neighborhood where Universalism or Spiritualism prevailed, would you preach against them, or pass them by ?

Mr. Beecher. — I cannot answer that question precisely, it would depend on so many considerations ; the first of which might be how far the preacher were himself infected with it. Secondly, what class of the community was infected. If the thinking class, and the influential, three or four families, I might take one course ; but if it was only the ignorant, and those that had no influence upon society, I might take another course. That is a theme which I shall take up more fully by and by, in speaking of entering a new community ; but I am quite willing to consider the question now, for I do not fear to exhaust the subject.

I recollect hearing my father say that when he went

to East Hampton and began to preach there, he was surrounded by the influence of French infidelity, and the leading men of that community were infidels. Said he: "I did not undertake to argue with them. I preached one or two great sermons, to show them I had big guns and was not afraid of them; and after that I preached right to their consciences; and the result was that a great revival of religion came up there, and after that I never heard anything about infidelity." One of the most affecting little things came to my knowledge the other day. There was one man in that congregation who was never converted, who never gave up ostensibly his infidelity; although he loved my father very much indeed, yet he never seemed to be brought into the kingdom during his time there. There was one little child, Harriet, born into our family, which after a short time fell asleep. This little baby was the only thing we left behind in moving from the place. So this man, twenty or twenty-five years after father had gone away, said one day to his wife, "I cannot bear to have that little child of Dr. Beecher's left there all alone"; and he had the child taken up, and put it in his own ground, where his wife now lies on one side and he upon the other, and the little baby snugly gathered in their bosoms there. Such was the effect produced upon his mind by my father's preaching and example; and although he did not outwardly come into the community of the faith, the impression never wore off, and I should not wonder if he were in heaven.

Q. If you went into a neighborhood in which there were petty troubles among families, would you preach against such things?

MR. BEECHER. — Generally speaking, meddling with

families is dangerous business ; and as it is dangerous personally, so it is dangerous pulpitly ; inasmuch as you would instantly, for the most part, produce sides, and they would take your sermon and turn it into artillery to fire at each other, backward and forward. No; if you want to cure one malign feeling, recollect that our feelings act, as it were, in poles ; that there is an antagonistic feeling. If a child cries, the nurse, who is a better philosopher than many wiser heads, makes the child laugh. She makes up faces, makes herself grotesque ; the child struggles against it for a while, but finally bursts out laughing, and that moment the crying and the anger are all gone. Two opposite feelings cannot coexist. If anger is up, good-nature is down. If you want to get anger down, don't try to push it down, — that won't do ; but go to the other end and pry up good-nature.

Q. Going into a small place, where there are few educating influences, would not you preach a fair proportion of educating sermons ?

Mr. Beecher. — Is not the arousing influence of the revival system an educating one ? Is there any education that proceeds so fast as that which takes place under a warm and newly developed moral feeling ? Men in the ordinary stage are like robins' eggs in the nest; you cannot feed them. Let the robin sit on them a little while, and by and by there will be nothing but four mouths, and as fast as you put in worms they will gulp them. To educate man in the cold and natural state is just like feeding eggs. Warm them, and give them life, and they will eat.

Q. You speak of presenting the truth as a man thinks it and feels it and lives it himself. Is there a danger connected with

that, of being too egotistical in our preaching, so that when we present a truth as we feel it and think it, men will say, "Here is a man that professes to have a great deal deeper thoughts, and a great deal deeper feelings than we have," and an antagonistic feeling will be aroused against us? How can that be overcome?

Mr. Beecher. — You will never preach so wisely or so well, if you preach continuously, as to guard against all these dangers. You cannot help yourself. If a surgeon were ten times as skilful as he is, and he had to probe a wound, he could not probe it so that it would be a luxury to the patient. If anything is to be cut off, or tied up, or changed radically, changed in such a way that the pride must come down, it will cause pain. It is not easy to take the yoke or the burden of Christ, *in the taking of it;* it is only after you have got your neck accustomed to it that the yoke is easy and the burden is light. No matter how wisely or well you put it, there will be trouble, and it will be just in proportion to the disturbance you make. And the disturbance will be according to the wisdom and the love which you manifest. No man is such a master of his business that he can go into a community and preach, saying to himself, "This is ideally perfect." Your mode of presenting the truth will be imperfect. Your partialisms are full of danger. For instance, if you are a quiet man, you will have a tendency to preach so as not to arouse any feeling. On the other hand, if you are pugnacious and energetic, your sermons will be apt to be full of lances and thrusts. There is a great deal about a man's personality that has got to be educated. If one is frank, genial, warm-hearted, and if he is going to be a minister, and pulls down his face and says, "Now I must walk with the

utmost precision," and he begins to walk *just so*, and to administer *just so*, thinking that coldness and sanctity have some peculiar relation to each other, he does violence to his nature. When God made him warm-hearted and gushing, he gave him a power with which to do his work. Take your strongest point and make the most of it. The modifications and limitations of this will come up for more remark hereafter.

Q. Don't you think it is a good plan to preach a variety of sermons, intellectual and emotional ?

Mr. Beecher. — Never two alike, if you can help it. I heard described the other day a style of preaching which was likened to the way they are said to build ships down in Maine. They build them down there by the mile ; and when they have an order they cut off so much, round up a stern and a bow, and send it. Thus some sermons seem to have been built by the mile. There seems to be no earthly reason why the preacher should begin in one place rather than another, or why he should stop in one place rather than another. He could preach ten hours, if not ordered to stop ; and wherever he stops he is ready to begin again ; and so to go on until the judgment-day. That kind of iteration is the most hurtful of all things. A man keeps a boarding-house, and the boarders like bacon for breakfast. So he gives them bacon on Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday, and Sunday, and Monday, and Tuesday, — until by and by one of them comes to him and says, " Mr. Jacobs, we like bacon pretty well, but lately we have got tired of it ; we should like something else." " Well, what will you have ?" " Let

us have pork and beans." So he gives them pork and beans on Monday, pork and beans on Tuesday, and on Wednesday, and keeps feeding them on pork and beans until they protest again. Now, everybody gets stale on any one thing. Seventeen sermons on the doctrine of retribution as it is found in nature rather tire a man out. Mrs. Stowe said, when she returned from Germany, that she really enjoyed the German church singing until they reached the eighteenth or nineteenth stanza, but she generally got tired then; and it is about so with preaching.

II.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PREACHER.

February 1, 1872.

ELOQUENCE has been defined, sometimes, as the art of moving men by speech. Preaching has this additional quality, that it is the art of moving men from a lower to a higher life. It is the art of inspiring them toward a nobler manhood.

In thinking about the preparation for the Christian ministry, we are apt to regard the sermon as the chief thing; and certainly, in the whole series of instruments, it does rank highest, for the power of the man, all that he has been doing collaterally, culminates in that. After all, there is a world of encouragement for men that cannot preach. If a preacher is a true man (and a true man spreads out and covers with himself all times and all places), he preaches not only while he is in the pulpit; but just as much when he is conversing with a little child upon the sidewalk, when he is in a social company, or when he is out on a sportive or picnic occasion with his people. A true minister is a man whose manhood itself is a strong and influential argument with his

people. He lives in such relations with God, and in such genuine sympathy with man, that it is a pleasure to be under the unconscious influence of such a mind. Just as, lying on a couch in a summer's evening, you hear from a neighboring house the low breathing of an instrument of music, so far away that you can only hear its palpitation, but cannot discern the exact tune that is played, and are soothed by it and drawn nearer to hear more; thus the true Christian minister is himself so inspiring, so musical, there is so much of the divine element in him, rendered homelike by incarnation with his disposition, brought down to the level of man's understanding, that wherever he goes little children want to see him, plain people want to be with him; everybody says when he comes, "Good!" and everybody says when he goes away, "I wish he had stayed longer"; all who come in contact with him are inclined to live a better life. Manhood is the best sermon. It is good to fill the minds of people with the nobleness and sweetness of the thing itself to which you would fain draw them. "Go preach" was no more authoritative than "Let your light so shine that men, seeing your good works, shall glorify your Father."

There is no form of preaching that can afford to dispense with the preacher's moral beauty. He may be as homely as you please, physically; as awkward as you please; but you will find in the true preacher somewhere an element of beauty; for God works always toward beauty, which is one sign of perfection, so that, though not an essential element, beauty is still a sign and token of the higher forms of creation.

I endeavored to impress you yesterday with the idea that preaching is the exertion of the living force of men upon living men for the sake of developing in them a higher manhood. I say a higher manhood rather than a higher life, because I do not wish to separate a Christian life as something distinct from the movement of the whole being. Men are not like musical organs of many stops, one of which is Religion, as something separable and distinct from the rest of their nature. Religion is harmonized human nature. It includes every element which manhood includes. It is wholesomeness of soul. It is manhood, on a higher plane. It includes the physical, the social, the intellectual, the æsthetic, the moral, the spiritual. The whole man working in harmony with the laws of his condition, — that is the New Testament idea of a Christian man. And that which we undertake to do by preaching, whether in its technical or special form, by the delivery of a sermon or in its collateral and more diffusible forms by social intercourse, is to mould and shape men into a nobler manhood, Jesus Christ being the highest ideal and exemplar. Our ministry is effectual in proportion as we do that, and deficient in the proportion in which we fail to do it.

SHOW-SERMONS.

A good many young men, beginning to preach, feel that they don't know what to do. They naturally fall back upon their note-books, upon the development of some system of truth. They undertake to present to their people topic after topic based upon great gospel themes. And of course they can do no better than that

in the beginning. Still, that is rather preparing to preach than preaching. It is like a man who is practising with his rifle at a target that he does not see, who hits by accident if he hits, rather than by deliberate aim. You cannot expect a man to do better until he has learned. It is no easy thing for one to be in such familiar possession of the great moral truths revealed in the Bible, and in such familiar knowledge of men's natures and dispositions, that he can take of the one and fit it to the other almost by intuition. But intuition is only a name for superior habit.

No one should be discouraged in the beginning of his ministry, therefore, if he finds himself running short of subjects; preaching a great deal and accomplishing but very little; having comparatively a light hold upon truths, and not being able by these truths to grapple men effectually. Every one has an ideal in his mind. He thinks of Whitefield; and of Jonathan Edwards, with the man pulling at his coat-tails and trying to stop that terrible burst of statement and denunciation that was crushing the congregation. Every young man who is aspiring wants to do great things, and to preach great sermons. Great sermons, young gentlemen, ninety-nine times in a hundred, are nuisances. They are like steeples without any bells in them; things stuck up high in the air, serving for ornament, attracting observation, but sheltering nobody, warming nobody, helping nobody. It is not these great sermons that any man should propose to himself as models. Of course, if now and then in legitimate, honest, and manly work, you are in the right mood, and are brought into a state of excitement of which a great

sermon is the result, preach it, and don't be afraid. But great sermons will come of themselves, when they are worth anything. Don't seek them; for that of itself is almost enough to destroy their value.

I do not say this for the purpose of abating one particle of your studiousness, or the earnestness with which you labor. I do not undertake to say that there may not be some indulgence at times in that direction; that is to say, if you have written a sermon that has done good, it may do good again. But I do say that, generally speaking, show-sermons are the temptation of the Devil. They do not lie in the plane of common, true Christian, ministerial work. They are not natural to a man whose heart is moved with genuine sympathy for man, and who is inspired in that sympathy by the fire of the Spirit of God. There is a false greatness in sermons as well as in men. Vanity, Ambition, Pedantry, are demons that love to clothe themselves in rhetorical garments, like angels of light!

SYMPATHY WITH MEN.

In speaking of bringing to bear upon men a living force for their exaltation in the spiritual life, I want to call your attention to the very natural substitutes that men take for this. I know men of great learning, — I could mention their names, and you would recognize them as men of great ability in their pastoral lives, — men of the greatest breadth of thought, and really and interiorly men of profound emotion; but their ministry has never been very fruitful; that is, they have never moved either the multitudes, or, very largely, the individuals, of the community where they have been. I

have thought I saw the reason of it in this: that their sympathy ran almost exclusively toward God. They were on God's side altogether. They were always vindicating God. They were upholding the Divine government. And they produced, if I may say so, the feeling that they were God's attorneys, that they were special pleaders on that side. I would not say that a man should not be in sympathy with God, but it must be remembered that God himself is in sympathy with sinful and erring men, that he broke down all the brilliance and glory of the heavenly estate that he might mingle himself among them; and no preacher is the true agent of God, or really takes sides with God, who does not sympathize with men, but who simply holds up the majesty and sternness and power and glory of the Divine government.

I have seen men who all the while produced the impression, GOD — GOD — GOD; there was nothing in them that breathed of gentleness, sweetness, or sympathy, — the very things that characterized Christ, and which were in him the interpretation of the real interior Godhead; those things were absent from their ministry; and, if you will not misunderstand it, I would say that they failed because they had too exclusive a sympathy with God.

Then I have seen another class of men who were so constructed and educated that they had an intense sympathy with ideas, with organized thought, religious system, or philosophy; who studied profoundly, who constructed ably, who had much that was instructive in their work. But after all, while everybody felt the strength of their sermons, almost nobody was moved or

changed by them. And I have seen ministers with not one quarter of this equipment really lift and inspire a congregation, producing an effect which, with a proper following up, might have been permanently crystallized into life and disposition.

There should be in you a strong sympathy with the intellectual elements of the ministry; but it should never overlie, and certainly should not absorb or impede, the more legitimate sympathy you are to have with men themselves. Reflect for one moment what must have been the state of mind of the man who wrote such a thing as this: —

"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ."

Paul was intensely proud, sensitive as a thermometer is to heat; and you will see that under all the sweetness, the efflorescence of the Christian life, there is still the principle of egotism: —

"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake; but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labor, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

You will recollect other passages in which he said that to the Jew he became a Jew that he might win Jews; and to those without law, as without law, that

he might bring them all to God. There never was such a manifestation of the willowiness of a man of absolute steel in disposition. He was one of stern personal identity; and yet, by the love of Christ and by the sympathy he had with men, he said, — or would have said, had he spoken in modern English, — "I know how to fit myself to every sinuosity and rugosity of every single disposition with which I have to deal; you cannot find me a man so deep or so high, so blunt or so sharp, but I would take the shape of that man's disposition, in order to come into sympathy with him, if by so doing I could lift him to a higher and a nobler plane of life."

When I see men standing in the royalty of ordination, who have been made golden candlesticks of grace, who feel what is called "the dignity of their profession," and move up and down in life, neatly receiving the praise and deference of everybody round about them, and requesting men who pass to look upon God's ordained ministers, I think by contrast of Paul, with that diffusiveness that he gave himself, that universal adaptation of himself, — who *mothered* everybody, wherever he went. There is not a thing so menial in the kitchen, there is not a thing so distasteful in the nursery, there is not a thing so offensive to every sense, that the mother does not say, over her sick child, "Now let me do it; should the child die, it would be a grief to think that anybody did these things but me." The mother makes haste to do those most offensive things for her darling child because she loves it. And so the true man has that vital sympathy with men, that there is nothing that he would not become or do, if by

so doing he could get hold of them and make better men of them, that, as Paul says, he may present them faultless before God.

PERSONAL CHARACTER OF THE PREACHER.

Your work, therefore, as a Christian minister, let me say as the first point I want to make this afternoon, in addition to what I said yesterday, requires that you should, first of all, see to the elevation of character of the man that preaches. He it is who ought to blossom. You cannot become a good minister simply by being expert in theology. You cannot without it, either; theology must be practically or technically learned. But you cannot be a true preacher with this equipment alone. A dictionary is not literature, though there is no literature without the contents of the dictionary in it. You have got yourself to bring up to the ideal of the New Testament. A part of your preparation for the Christian ministry consists in such a ripening of your disposition that you yourselves shall be exemplars of what you preach. And by an exemplar I do not mean simply that you must be a man who does not cheat his neighbor, or who unites in himself all the scrupulosities of the neighborhood; but a minister ought to be entirely, inside and out, a pattern man; not a pattern man in abstention, but a man of grace, generosity, magnanimity, peaceableness, sweetness, though of high spirit, and self-defensory power when required; a man who is broad, and wide, and full of precious contents. You must come up to a much higher level than common manhood, if you mean to be a preacher. You are not to be a needle to carry a thin thread, and sew up

old rags all your life long. That is not the thing to which you are called. You are called to be men of such nobleness and largeness and gentleness, so Pauline, and so Christlike, that in all your intercourse with the little children, and with the young people of your charge, you shall produce a feeling that they would rather be with the minister than any gentleman in the State, — always fresh, always various, always intent on the well-being of others, well understanding them and their pleasures and sympathies, promoting enjoyment, promoting instruction, promoting all that is noble in its noblest form and purest Christlikeness, — that is what it is your business to be.

Now, with that disposition and tendency well established in yourselves, and with sympathy established between yourselves and your parishioners, my young friends, you will never lack for sermons. If your sermons are the reproductions simply of systematic theology, you will lack for them, — thank God! You may have sermons on theology, on technical theology; do not suppose that I am undervaluing them. I am only undervaluing the idolatry of them. By theology I understand simply the philosophy of religion, — accurate thinking, systematic, articulated thinking; and that I believe in — in its place.

But this I say, that there is no theology in the world that is anything more than an instrument. It is a mere tool to work with, an artillery to fight with. Sermons are mere tools; and the business that you have in hand is not making sermons, or preaching sermons, — it is *saving men*. Let this come up before you so frequently that it shall never be forgotten, that none

of these things should gain ascendency over this prime controlling element of your lives, that you are to save men.

And the first thing you have to do is to present to them what you want them to be. That is, if you are to preach to them faith, the best definition you can give of faith is to exercise it. If you wish to teach them the nature of sympathy, take them by the hand. Talk with the young men, and let them get acquainted with you ; and they will soon find out what sympathy means. If you would explain what true benevolence is, be yourselves before them that which you want them to understand and imitate. What does the apostle tell us ? "Ye are our epistles, known and read of all men," said Paul ; and he could say it, and so could the whole primitive church, and so can we yet to-day. If it were a good thing to do, I could pick out to-day the examples from my church, and say, "This is what I mean by zeal tempered with prudence ; that is what I mean by the sweet forbearance of love ; if you would see what disinterested kindness is, see there" ; and the rest would all say, "Amen." That is certainly the law of the pew, and what is the law of the pew ought to be the law of the pulpit.

Christian ministers are to be, not men that pray four times a day, and wear black clothes and white cravats and walk with the consciousness that the whole universe is looking upon them. A minister is a live man. He is a large-hearted man. If anywhere else he is deficient, he cannot be deficient in heart.

Some one asked me yesterday, What was to be regarded as a proper call to the ministry ? I reply, the

possession of those qualities which make a good minister, — good sense, good nature, good health, and downright moral earnestness. It is signally true, however, in this matter, "that many are called, but few are chosen." We need more manhood and less professionalism. Scholarship is good for little that does not enrich manhood. It is the man that is in you that preaches. When God calls he begins early, and calls through your parents. "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Be sure that it is *you* that is called. It is evident that in many cases some one else was meant when certain persons heard a call. When God calls very loud at the time you are born, standing at the door of life, and says, "Quarter of a man, come forth!" that man is not for the ministry. "Half a man, come forth!" no; that will not do for a preacher. "Whole man, come!" that is *you*. The man must be a man, and a full man, that is going to be a true Christian minister, and especially in those things which are furthest removed from selfishness and the nearest in alliance with true divine love.

FERTILITY IN SUBJECTS.

Sympathy with your people, insight of their condition, a study of the moral remedies, this will give endless diversity and fertility to your subjects for sermons. He that preaches out of a system of theology soon runs his round and returns on his track. He that preaches out of a sympathy with living men will sooner exhaust the ocean or the clouds of water, than his pulpit of material. It is true that subjects must be studied; that

principles must be traced, that facts must be collected and arranged, that books must be studied, that systems must be understood. But all this is far back of preaching. It is general preparation. Out of the stores thus accumulated one must select for sermons, on the principle that a physician selects remedies for the sick, or stewards provide food for the household, with an eye on the persons to be treated. The wants of your people must set back into the sermon, and give to it depth, direction, and current. Preaching is sometimes word-brooding; sometimes it is a flash of light to those in darkness; sometimes a basket of golden fruit to the hungry, a cordial to the comfortless, — all to all, — just as Christ is All *in* All! You will very soon come, in your parish life, to the habit of thinking more about your people and what you shall do for them than about your sermons and what you shall talk about. That is a good sign. Just as soon as you find yourself thinking, on Monday or Tuesday, "Now, here are these persons, or this class," — you run over your list and study your people, — "what shall I do for them?" you will get some idea what you need to do. Sometimes it is to call men from their sins; sometimes to repress the malign; sometimes to encourage hope in the faint-hearted; sometimes to instruct the understanding; sometimes to broaden men's knowledge, and move them off of their prejudices. There are a thousand things to do.

A preacher is a carpenter, building a house. You ought to know, as the house goes up, what you shall do next. Or, if it be built, and you are to furnish the house, you are to determine what is to be its furniture, and how distributed. You will know that this

room is not lighted, or that room is not warmed. Wherever you go among your people, you will, to use the mercantile figure, "be taking account of stock." That will suggest an endless number of subjects, and these subjects will turn you back to the New Testament to see what you can find there; and that will send you back to Nature, where you will see what is in God's other great revelation.

In this way you will grow fertile. You will not be troubled in looking for subjects on which to write sermons; your only trouble will be to find opportunities for delivering sermons. I know that some men are more fertile than others; but a sympathetic study of human life is a remedy for uniform theology.

STYLE.

The effect of this notion of preaching — preaching from sympathy with living men rather than from sympathy with any particular system of thought — upon the preacher's style will be very great. I have often heard ministers in private conversation, and said to myself, "Would to God you would do so in the pulpit!" But the moment they are in the pulpit they fall into their scholastic, artificial style, which runs through the whole ministerial life. A man will talk to you naturally, and say, "I *do* wish you would come down to-night; the young people had the promise of your coming, and why won't you come?" — sweet, natural, pleading, persuasive. Yet he will go into the desk, where prayer is to be made in a persuasive tone, and he will begin addressing the Lord with a drawling, whining falsetto in voice, and a worse falsetto in morals. He has thrown himself

out of his proper self into a ministerial self, — a very different thing! A man will stop you in the street and discourse with you there, and be just as limber and affable in his sentences, just as curt and direct and crisp and simple in conversational vernacular as any one; and yet in the pulpit, two-thirds of what he has to say will be Latin periphrases woven together; three members on one side the sentence-pivot, balanced by three members on the other, and that recurring all the time. This style is false to everything but books. It may be all in sympathy with them; but no man in earnest, talking to his fellow-men with a purpose, falls into that artificial style. The man who preaches from the heart to the heart can hardly help preaching so that there shall be a naturalness in his style, and that will be the best style for him. I have known men who would be excellent ministers, if it were not, first, for their lives; secondly, for their theology; and thirdly, for their style.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSION.

One other point. I was asked yesterday if I would say a few words as to "the call.' I have already indicated a word as to the call for the ministry. Practically, it acts in this way. Young men are sometimes brought up to it, as I was. I never had any choice about it. My father had eight sons. Only two of them ever tried to get away from preaching; and they did not succeed. The other six went right into the ministry just as naturally as they went into manhood. Therefore, so far as personal experience is concerned, I have nothing to say.

I have observed, however, in classes in college, and

elsewhere, that where young men have not been brought up to believe all through their childhood that they were to be ministers, they generally have the question brought to their minds in some serious mood, whether they ought to go into the law, or into medicine, or to be civil engineers, or whether they ought to go into the ministry. They think about it a good while, and at last it is borne in upon them, without any special reason, that they had better preach; and they resolve to do it. These are young men who ordinarily cannot form judgments; they drift. When you look beyond this number, what are some of the elements that fit a man for the life of a true Christian minister?

I say, first, the preacher ought to be a man who is *fruitful in moral ideas*, has a genius for them, as distinguished from every other kind of ideas. We know what it is to have a genius for arithmetical or mathematical ideas, for musical ideas, or for æsthetic or art ideas. A tendency in the direction of moral ideas, whether developed or susceptible of being developed, is a prime quality.

A second quality fitting a man for the Christian ministry, is the *power of moving men*. If a man is cold and unsympathetic, perhaps he may be able to make himself over; but if he cannot, he had better not go into the ministry. It will be a hard task for such a one. But a man that has quick sympathy, apprehensiveness of men, intuition of human nature, has eminent qualifications for a minister. Every merchant, who is a true merchant, has to know how to deal with his customers. The moment they come into the store he reads them. A good jury lawyer must have the same aptitude. We

are all the time obliged to use these qualities, the knowledge of men, the power of managing men. A real master of men, when one draws near to him, forms a judgment of the new-comer just as instinctively and as quickly as of a locomotive or a horse. (Do you ever see a fine horse go by and not take his points? Then your education has been neglected.) A minister who walks down a whole street and sees nobody, who only looks inside of himself, is but half a minister. Self-absorption is permissible once in a while; but the aptitude to deal with men, to incite the springs of human thought and feeling, the knowledge of how to move men, — that is to be maintained in power only by incessant practice and observation; but if you have that in connection with the genius for moral ideas, you have two qualifications.

A third qualification is what I may call *living by faith*, the sense of the infinite and the invisible; the sense of something else besides what we see with the physical eyes; the sense of God, of eternity, and of heaven. If I were asked what had been in my own ministry the unseen source of more help and more power than anything else, I should say that my mother gave to me a temperament that enabled me to see the unseeable and to know the unknowable, to realize things not created as if they were, and oftentimes far more than if they were, present to my outward senses. The rain comes out of the great ether above. You see nothing of it to-night, though it is there, and descends to-morrow on the grass and the flowers; so out of the invisible realm of the spirit within which you are living under the crystalline dome of eternity, populous with love and law and truth,

you will have a sense of the vastness and magnitude of the sphere in which you are working which will descend upon your life with fructifying power.

Another thing: you should have good health; and a fair portion of common sense, which is the only quality that I think never is increased by education; that is born in a man, — or, if it is not, that is the end. But if, with those other qualities, you have good sense and good vigorous health, and withal are of a good social disposition, you have the qualifications out of which a minister can be fashioned.

There is one thing more. I do not think that any man has a right to become a Christian minister, who is not willing and thankful to be the least of all God's servants and to labor in the humblest sphere. If you would come into the Christian ministry, hoping to preach such a sermon as Robert Hall would have preached, you are not fit to come in at all. If you have a deep sense of the sweetness of the service of Christ; if the blood of the redemption is really in your heart and in your blood; if you have tasted what gratitude means, and what love means, and if heaven is such a reality to you that all that lies between youth and manhood is but a step toward heaven; if you think that the saving of a single soul would be worth the work of your whole life, you have a call, and a very loud call. A call to the ministry is along the line of humility, and love, and sympathy, and good sense, and natural aspirations toward God.

I recollect when I returned from the first revival in which I ever worked. I had been at Indianapolis between one and two years, and there had been no revival

(and I had never been in one since I was a boy). I went out, on Brother Jewett's call, from Indianapolis to Terre Haute; and I worked there three weeks in a revival until my heart was on fire; and it rained a stream of prayer all the way home from Terre Haute to Indianapolis. It was like an Aurora Borealis, I have no doubt, ray upon ray, for that whole distance, if angels could have seen it. It was in that feeling all the way, "Lord, slay me if thou wilt; but I will be slain, or will have life and salvation among my people." On Sunday I gave notice that I would preach every night that week. We had a dingy lecture-room in my church that would hold about two hundred people. I preached Monday night, and we had a storm; Tuesday night it rained again, and when I called upon any who were awakened to remain, no one stayed; and I said, "It makes no difference; if the Lord wishes it to be so, I do!" On Wednesday night I preached again, with more power, and called for inquirers at the close; one poor little thin servant-girl stopped! She smelt of the kitchen and looked kitchen all over. When I dismissed the congregation, my first feeling, I know, as I went toward her, was one of disappointment. I said to myself that after so much work it was too bad. It was just a glance, an arrow which the Devil shot at me, but which went past. The next minute I had an overwhelming revulsion in my soul; and I said to myself, "If God pleases, I will work for the poorest of his creatures. I will work for the heart of a vagabond, if I am permitted to do it, and bring him to Christ Jesus." I felt it; and I thanked God that night for that girl's staying. He paid me the next night, for two of my sweetest children — not my

own, but they were like my own to me — stopped on the next night, and after that the work went on.

If, therefore, you feel willing to work for Christ's sake, for the sake of eternity, for the love that you have for the intrinsic sweetness of the work of the ministry, the moulding of men and making them better and helping them upward; if this is itself sweet and pleasant to you; if you are moved to do it in low places, without renown, and are willing to take your crown hereafter for it, you are called, and there is no doubt about it. But if you want only this, — to be very eloquent men, and to watch the eloquence of others; or if you want to have a big church, with a big salary behind it, and if that is your call to the ministry, stay away. You may be called, but it was not the Lord that called you; it was the Devil.

Don't come from pride, but come from a love for the work; and then, let me tell you, your work will be music. I hear ministers talk about their cares and their burdens. There are cares and burdens, but no more than there are discords in Beethoven's symphonies; and your work will be as sweet and as musical as his symphonies are. Working for men! There is nothing so congenial. It is the only business on earth that I know of, excepting the mother's business, that is clean all the way through; because it is using superior faculties, superior knowledge, not to take advantage of men, but to lift them up and cleanse them, to mould them, to fashion them, to give them life, that you may present them before God.

I am done, unless you wish to ask questions. I am open to-day and every day for them.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. How shall one get the power of adaptation of one's self to others, and how shall he increase it?

MR. BEECHER. — If you were taking drawing lessons, and attempting to portray the human face, but with so little success as to make it very doubtful what you were trying to do; and if you should look up to your teacher and say to him, "How shall I increase my ability to draw faces?" what would he say to you? "Practice, — practice, — that will do it." Preaching is in one sense an art; not in the ignoble sense. It is a thing to be learned, both in general principles and in practical details. It is learned by some, as every trade is, much more easily than by others. It is learned by continuous trying and practising. A young minister ought not to be discouraged if he works three or four years in a parish before he really begins to get the control of things.

Q. Is it a good way to learn to move men by learning to move children?

MR. BEECHER. — Yes; any way; not merely with children, but with everybody else. You are all of you in society. You have class-mates, room-mates. You can begin practising a good deal of the ministry now. Suppose, in a thing in which you have been accustomed to make your room-mate give up to you, after this you give up to him. Suppose you take some of the familiar Scriptural texts, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of another"; "In honor preferring one another" test yourselves by

that. See if you can in all cases give up, one to another; give those around you the advantage of every opening, and hold yourselves back. Try all these tests. These are admirable principles; and if you do not learn adaptation by practising the Christian virtues, then I am mistaken. What is *minister?* It is *servant;* serving men in love is ministering.

Q. What is the occasion of the tendency toward short pastorates in churches nowadays?

Mr. Beecher. — Largely, I think, the divine mercy toward the parish. I do not mean by that that I consider a short pastorate a desirable thing, provided the conditions of long pastorates are complied with; but if a man has only a little in him, and is not going to have any more, I think his removal is a great mercy to his parish. When the cup is empty, it would better be removed and another one filled and brought in its place. Where one has breadth; where he will give himself to the work of the ministry, in public and in his study both; if the study and the street work into each other all the way, he has a true ministry, and he has that in him which will last. A long pastorate has some advantages that cannot be over-estimated. But shallow men, who are sometimes called broad men, ought to have short pastorates. If you take the Erie Canal, and without increasing the amount of water, remove one bank to a distance of half a mile, you will broaden it very much, but you will have perhaps only a quarter of an inch depth of water. A great many men spread themselves out, and broaden, in that way, and grow shallower and shallower. Such men soon evaporate.

Q. Some of us expect to spend several months this summer in preaching. Would you encourage us to preach in the revival style the very first thing, and keep on right through?

MR. BEECHER. — If you mean by the revival style, that which is addressed exclusively to the feelings, I should say No, not in all cases. You may be thrown among a set of mountain men, where your preaching will be a great deal more out of the pulpit than in it. Paul, you know, wove tent-cloth; and I have no doubt that when he sat down with the common people and worked with them, he was preparing to preach to them. The first thing you want in a neighborhood is to get *en rapport* with the people. You want to get their confidence, to induce them to listen to you. It is a part of the intuition of a true preacher to know how to get at men. He looks at a man as Hobbs looked at a lock, who always asked himself, "How can I pick it?"

When I see a man I instinctively divide him up, and ask myself, How much has he of the animal, how much of the spiritual, and how much of the intellectual? And what is his intellect, perceptive or reflective? Is he ideal, or apathetic, or literal? And I instinctively adapt myself to him.

There is no mystery about this; it is simple enough. You all adapt yourselves in just that way. You never treat an ox in any other way than as an ox. You never treat it as if it were a horse. But that same process by which you adapt yourselves unconsciously to the more apparent and superficial aspects of nature can be carried further; you can adapt yourself to the disposition of another, and know how to take him, where to take him, what will offend, and what will not offend.

Q. How would you influence a contrary man who stayed away from church for a month?

Mr. Beecher.— Very likely you labored with him too long. There are a great many ways.

There is no one way of working upon men. You must try them. In fact, you have got to try men as you try fish. You put on one fly, and when you cast, the trout don't rise. You whip it hither and thither a little while and try it. Perhaps it is the wrong time of day. You change the fly and try again. You come another hour of day; and if he won't rise, you come to-morrow and try again, and by and by you will catch him; but very likely it will be by what you do not look for at all, and he will bite, and you hook him unexpectedly. You are not to suppose you can bring men down as you would go into the woods to fell a tree. Some men require a good deal of diplomacy and management, and it takes a good deal of time. How long was it before the Lord himself managed you? How long God's providence waits for us! Many are the influences brought to bear upon us before we are subdued. You must not be in a hurry or impatient. You have not lost a man because he does n't take the truth the first time.

III.

THE PERSONAL ELEMENT IN ORATORY.

February 7, 1872.

I SHALL talk to you to-day on the general subject of *Personalism*, as affecting your success in reaching men with the truth, — including various modes of bringing *yourselves* to bear on others, from the pulpit, and the helps and hindrances in doing so, both on the mental and spiritual side, and on the physical or material side.

No man ever preaches, all the time thinking of producing specific effects, without very soon being made conscious that men are so different from each other that no preaching will be continuously effective which is not endlessly various; and that not for the sake of arresting attention, but because all men do not take in moral teaching by the same sides of their minds. I remember when it was the custom, and it was supposed a proper thing to do, for ministers to hold up a regular system of moral truth, sermon by sermon, and chapter by chapter, until the received average views of the day had been spread out before the congregation; and then it was hoped that a Divine Sovereignty would apply these truths to men's hearts. Experience ought to have

shown them that there is a class of hearers in every intelligent community that will never be led except through their reason. They will require that the path be laid down for them, and that they see it before they follow. They will not be content to receive the truth in any other mode than by the idea-form. If they cannot get it in one church, they will go to another; and if still they cannot find it, they will go nowhere. Yet, if you shape your preaching, as often literary men in the pulpit are accustomed to do, to the distinctively intellectual men in the community, you will very soon fill them full and starve the rest of your congregation; because, right alongside of them, there are natures just as noble as theirs, but not accustomed to receive their food through the mouth of reason, except in an incidental and indirect way. We all use our reason, more or less, in all processes; but then there are a great many persons who want the truth presented in emotive forms.

DIFFERENT CLASSES OF HEARERS.

The hard reasoner says, "No tears for me; don't color your preaching; I want it pure as the beams of light, and as transparent; and the calmer and more inexorably logical its propositions, and the more mathematical its proof, the better I like it." But there are in any community probably six to one who will watch for the emotional and impassioned part of the sermon, saying "That is the preaching I want; I can understand what I feel." They are fed by their hearts. They have as much right to be fed by their hearts as the others have to be fed by their reason.

You should strive, in setting the table in your church

wherever you may be, to do as the hotel proprietor does. He never says to himself, "What dish do I like best? — that will I put on the table"; or, "What dishes do Lawyer A and Physician B like best?" He spreads his tables for the benefit of the community at large, — something for everybody; and he does wisely. The man who means to catch men, and to catch all of them, must prepare bait for those that bite purely by the understanding, and just as much bait for those that bite largely by their emotions. But there is another class. I recollect my dear old father talking about persons that worshipped God in clouds and saw the hand of God in beauty. He would say, "It is all moonshine, my son, with no doctrine nor edification nor sanctity in it at all, and I despise it." I never knew my father to look at a landscape in his life, unless he saw pigeons or squirrels in it. I have seen him watch the stream, but it was, invariably, to know if there were pickerel or trout in it. He was a hunter, every inch; but I never could discern that he had an æsthetic element in him, so far as relates to pure beauty. Sublimity he felt. Whatever was grand he appreciated very keenly. I do not think that he ever looked at one building in his life, except the Girard College. When he came suddenly upon that, and it opened up to him, he looked up and admired it; and I always marvelled at that, as a little instance of grace in him.

That is laughable to you, I have no doubt; and since these addresses are the most familiar of all talks, I will give you a little more of my amusing experience with him at home. When he became an old man he lived six months in my family, and became during that time

much interested in the pictures hanging on the walls of the house. One which particularly attracted his attention, and with which he was greatly pleased, represented a beautiful lake, with hunters ensconced behind trees, shooting at ducks on the lake. He would look at that picture every day, and I, not thinking of the sportsmen, but only of the charming landscape, said to myself, "Well, it is good to see him breaking from the spell of some of his old ideas, and, now that he has become old, to see these fine gifts growing and coming out, — to behold him ripening into the æsthetic element in this way." One day I stood behind him, as he was looking at the picture, unconscious of my presence. Said he, "He must have hit one, two, three — and, I *guess,* four!"

Now, it is not strange that a person should, under such circumstances, having no appreciation of the beautiful in his nature, laugh to scorn the idea that beauty could ever lead a man to God, or bring him within the influence of the Lord Jesus Christ, or incline him to climb from a selfish to a spiritual life; but, I tell you there is many a mouth that requires to be fed by the æsthetic element.

It is not a vain thing to hear men say that they feel more like worshipping in music than in any other thing. The best organist in America for extemporaneous music is Mr. John Zundel. When he was converted, and came into the church, he said to me one morning, "It seems that everything in the world is new. Last night I prayed, but not as you do." I asked him what he meant, and he answered, "I do not speak my prayers." "Well," asked I, "how do you pray?" "On the piano

always," said he. That was true. He would sit down at his piano, when in a worshipping mood, shut his eyes and pray with his fingers. I did not wonder at it when I heard his music.

When I entered the first gallery of any magnitude in Europe, it was a revelation to me; I was deeply affected. It was at the Luxembourg. I had never imagined such a wealth of glory. The sense of exhilaration was so transcendent that I felt as if I could not stay in the body. I was filled with that supersensitiveness of supernal feeling which is true worship; and I never seemed to myself so near the gate of heaven. I never felt capable of so nearly understanding my Master; never in all my life was I conscious of such an earnestness to do his work, and to do it better than I did, as while under the all-pervading influence of that gallery of beauty.

I find a great many persons who say, "I do not much enjoy going to church, but if I am permitted to wander out into the fields, along the fringes of the forests, and to hear the birds sing, to watch the cattle, and to look at the shadows on the hills, I am sure it makes me a better man." Some others, like my dear old father, would say, "That is all moonshine; there is nothing in it, no thought, no truth, and no doctrine of edification." But there *is* truth in it. There are minds that open to spiritual things through that side of their nature more readily and easily than through any other. This should be recognized.

Then there is another class. There are a great many persons who are keenly sensitive on the side of imagination, and they never really receive anything as true,

until the fact or principle is, as it were, enveloped in a little haze. They need the mystic element. They do not want sharp outlines. There is something in mystery which is attractive to them. And yet some preachers insist that truth should be set before all men in its most accurate and exact form. You might just as well attempt to reduce the clouds to triangles and circles, in order to mathematically demonstrate their beauty to the eye of an artist.

HOW TO MEET DIFFERING MINDS.

Now, in order to reach and help all these varying phases of your congregation, you must take human nature as you find it, in its broad range. Understand this, that the same law which led the Apostle to make himself a Greek to the Greeks, and a Jew to the Jews, and to put himself under the law with those who were under the law; and that same everlasting good sense of conformity in these things, for the sake of taking hold of men where they can be reached, and lifting them up, requires you to study human nature as it is, and not as people tell you it ought to be. If a man can be saved by pure intellectual preaching, let him have it. If others require a predominance of emotion, provide that for them. If by others the truth is taken more easily through the imagination, give it to them in forms attractive to the imagination. If there are still others who demand it in the form of facts and rules, see that they have it in that form. Take men as it has pleased God to make them; and let your preaching, so far as concerns the selection of material, and the mode and method by which you are presenting the truth, fol-

low the wants of the persons themselves, and not simply the measure of your own minds.

AN EASY DANGER.

Too often men find a certain facility in themselves in single directions, and they confine their preaching to that particular line. The consequence is, their congregations are very soon classified. One sort of a preacher gets one sort of people, and another sort gets another sort of people, instead of all churches having some of every kind of mind in them. They become segregated and arranged according to ministers. That is very bad for the churches.

It is a good thing for a village that it has but one church for all the people; where the rich and poor, the cultured and the unlettered, have to come together, and learn to bear with each other. This is a part of that discipline and attrition which smooths and polishes men, and makes them better, if there is grace to do it. But in the cities you will find that churches are classified; and in the city of New York I can point out to you many a church in which there are almost no poor, plain people, but the great body are people of wealth, culture, and refinement; and the pulpit is invariably high-toned, perfectly pure in language, clear and methodical in discourse, always proper, — so proper, in fact, that it is almost dead for want of life, for want of side branches, for want of adaptation and conformity to human nature as it is. It is under such circumstances, where a man follows a single groove in himself or in his congregation, and does it because he learns to work easier so, year by year, — and it is really on that

account, — that preaching becomes narrowed down and very soon wears out.

It has been asked here, why pastors change so often. Preachers are too apt to set the truth before their congregations in one way only, — whichever one they find they have the greatest facility for; and that is like playing on one chord, — men get tired of the monotony. Whereas, preaching should be directed to every element of human nature that God has implanted in us, — to the imaginative, to the highly spiritual, to the moral, to that phase of the intellectual that works up and toward the invisible, and to the intellectual that works down to the material and tangible.

He is a great man who can play upon the human soul! We think him a great artist, who can play on an organ with sixty stops, combining them infinitely, and drawing out harmony and melody, marching them through with grand thought, to the end of the symphony; that indicates a master, we think. It does; but what organ that man ever built does not shrink in comparison with the one that God built and called Man? Where you have before you a whole congregation or a whole community, and all their wants and needs are known, and you are trying to draw out of them a higher and nobler life, what an instrument you have to play upon, and what a power it is when you have learned it, and have the touch by which you can play so as to control its entire range and compass! There is nothing more sublime in this world than a man set upon lifting his fellow-men up toward Heaven, and able to do it. There are no sensations in this world comparable with those which one has whose whole soul

is aglow, waking into the consciousness of this power. It is the Divine power, and it is all working up toward the invisible and the spiritual. There is no ecstasy like it.

DEMANDS OF VARIETY UPON THE PREACHER.

There is another question which I have barely hinted at, and that is, in attempting to address the truth in different forms to men, so as to meet the wants of a whole community, must not a man be universal like Shakespeare? How can you expect men, taking them as they are, to do this?

My reasoning is this: It is not to be supposed that men will do it in perfection, that they will do it at once, or that they will ever more than approximate to the ideal. I shall have occasion to repeat every time I speak to you this thing, — you have got to *learn your business.* It will take years and years before you are expert preachers. Let nobody puff you up by saying you are able preachers, because you can preach three or four good sermons. You have three or four tunes; that is all. You are not practised workmen until you understand human nature, and know how to touch it with the Divine truth; until you comprehend the Divine truth in so many of its bearings upon the human soul that you can work with tolerable facility from the truth that is in Jesus to that which is in man; and, quite as often, can reverse the process. That is the study. You have not begun your education yet. You are but getting ready to study when you begin to preach. If you preach for five years, and find that your work is slow, and much of it obscure, and does not produce the re-

sults aimed at, do not be discouraged. The work is so great that you need not be ashamed, after working for years, to find that you are still an apprentice and not a journeyman.

HOW TO USE ONE'S OWN SPECIAL FORCES.

The question, then, comes up, How far shall a man conform to the strong tendencies of his own nature?

One man is himself very imaginative, and not a reasoner; or, he finds himself possessed of a judicial mind, calm, clear, but not enthusiastic; while another finds himself an artist, as it were, with a mind expansive and sensitive, seeing everything iridescent, in all colors. Can these men change their own endowments? Or, how can one conform to the endowment of the other?

A minister says, "I am naturally very sensitive to the praise and opinion of men. When I speak I can't get rid of the feeling of myself. I am standing before a thousand people, and I am all the time thinking about myself, — whether I am standing right, and what men are thinking of me. I can't keep that out of my mind." What is such a man to do? Can he change his own temperament?

On the other side, there are men who say, "I don't care what people think of me; I wish I cared more. I am naturally cold, somewhat proud, and self-sustained. People talk about sympathy and a warm side toward men, but I never feel any of that. I do what is right, if the heavens fall, and go on my way. If people like it, I am glad; and if they don't, that is their lookout." How can you change that disposi-

tion? How can a man alter the laws that are laid down for him?

Well, in one sense, he cannot change at all. You can make just as many prayers, write just as many resolutions, and keep just as long a journal as you please, recording the triumphs of grace over your approbativeness, and when you are screwed down in your coffin, you will have been no less of a praise-loving man than when you were taken out of the cradle. That quality grows, and it grows stronger in old age than at any other time. You will find that men get over some things in time; they become less and less imaginative; they become less severe as they grow older; but, if vanity is a part of their composition, old age only strengthens it, and they grow worse and worse as they grow in years. In general, too, if a man has a strong will, I do not think he loses any of it as he gets along through life. It becomes fixed, firm as adamant.

But it is not necessary that you should change much. Go and look at Central Park. Before the artistic hand of the landscape-gardener began to work upon its surface, there were vast ledges of rock in every direction, and other obstructions of the most stubborn character. Now, if, when the engineer came to look over the land for the purpose of laying it out into a beautiful park, he had said, "How under the sun am I going to blast out those rocks?" he would have had a terrible time of it, and would have been blasting until this day. Instead of that, however, he said, "I will plant vines around the edges of the rocks and let them run up over. The rocks will look all the better, and the vines will have a place to grow and display their beauty. In that way I will *make use* of the rocks."

So it is with your own nature. There is not a single difficulty in it which you cannot make use of, and which, after that, would not be a power for good. Suppose you are conscious, in your disposition, of approbativeness. Do you think you are more sensitive than thousands of God's best ministers have been? But perhaps you love the praise of men more than the praise of God. The thing for you to do, then, is to *train* your approbativeness, so that, instead of delighting in the lower types of praise, — those which imply weakness and which unman you, — you will strive after those which rise steadily higher and higher in the things which are of God. Now, it is not your fault that you have the element of approbativeness, but it is your fault that you suffer it to feed on despicable food. Train it to desire approbation for things that are noble and just, for doing, intensely, whatever is disinterested among men, and for things that other men cannot do. Task yourselves as men should do, and not like boys or puling girls. Have such a conception of manhood in Christ Jesus that you would scorn praise for things that are less than noble. Strike a line through the head, and seek praise for things that are represented above the line and. not below it.

You cannot find a more beautiful or illustrious instance of the transformation of a great constitutional faculty than in Paul, — Paul, the fiercely proud and arrogant, the man that was originally made for a persecutor. For, the moment the summer of Christ's love drew near and shone on him, he became a changed man. Although he moans and yearns in his teachings, and his letters are full of self-consciousness, yet it is all

extremely noble. It is beautiful. I would not take a single "I" out of Paul's epistles; and yet you might take scores out of every one of them, and they would scarcely be missed, there are so many. Where was there a man whose pride was more regal than his? and what a power it was, and how he used it for Christ's sake!

In regard to strong constitutional peculiarities, I would say, therefore, that you cannot eradicate them, and that you should not try to change them very much. You can *regulate* and *discipline* every one of your emotive powers; but do not try to quench them. Do not crucify anything. Do not crucify your passions. Do not crucify any basilar instinct. There is force in it, if you know how to use it as a force, in the propulsion of moral feeling and moral ideas. You may be naturally ambitious; you will be ambitious to the day of your death. Do not attempt to take away your constitutional endowment, only train it to things which are consonant with Divine sympathy and with true life. Make it work, not for yourself, but for others, and it will be a power that you need not be ashamed of.

SELF-TRAINING AN EDUCATION.

This whole necessity of self-use is provided as a school of education for every man, and especially may it be made efficient in the dissemination of the Gospel. He who gives his whole life-force to the work of converting men unto Christ, will find, I think, that for a long time he scarcely will need anybody to tell him what to do and what to be. You must go into a parish and say to yourself, "There is not a man, woman, or child within

the bounds of this parish to whom I am not beholden. I am to bring the force of my whole soul to bear upon these persons. I am to get thoroughly acquainted with them. I am to make them feel my personality. I am to prepare them to hear me preach by gaining their confidence outside of the church and pulpit." You must meet them in their every-day life, in their ruggedness and selfishness. You will find one man spoken of as a laughing-stock in one neighborhood, and another as an odious man in another. Nobody can be a laughing-stock or odious to you. You are like physicians who attend the inmates of a hospital; it matters not to them from what cause the patients are lying hurt and wounded there. Sick men belong to the physician's care, and he must take care of them. Do not pick out the beautiful and good, or those who suit you. Select from your parish the men who *need* you most, and if you cannot be patient with them, if you cannot bring your soul to be a sacrifice for others and bear with them, how can you make them understand what Jesus Christ did for the world? You have got to do that same thing right over again at home, with the members of your church, with the outcast and with the wanderer. You must be, if I may say so, *little Christs*. You must make a living sacrifice of yourself again and again, against your instincts, — humbling your pride, holding in desires, submitting to things you do not like, and doing things which are repugnant to your taste, for Christ's sake and for man's sake; learning to love to do it; and so interpreting, by your personality, what it means for Jesus Christ to have made a sacrifice of himself for the salvation of the world. What else did the

Apostle mean by saying, "Christ in you"? And if he promises to abide in you, how can he abide in you in any other sense than that?

PREACHING THE PREACHER'S WHOLE BUSINESS.

The next point I wish to make with you is, that if you are to be preachers in any such sense as this which I have explained to you, preaching will have to be your whole business. Now, in a small way, everybody preaches; but if you are going to be professional preachers, if you will make that your life-calling, it is not probable that there is one of you who was built large enough to do anything more than that. It will take all that you have in you and all your time. I do not think a man could run a locomotive-engine, paint pictures, keep school, and preach on Sundays to any very great edification. A man who is going to be a successful preacher should make his whole life run toward the pulpit.

Perhaps you will say, "Are you not, yourself, doing just the other thing? Don't you edit a paper, and lecture, and make political speeches, and write this, that, and the other thing? Are you not studying science, and are you not *au fait* in the natural enjoyments of rural life?"

Well, where a man stands in the pulpit, and all the streams run away from the pulpit down to those things, the pulpit will be very shallow and very dry; but when a man opens these streams in the neighboring hills as so many springs, and all the streams run down into the pulpit, he will have abundant supplies. There is a great deal of difference, whether you are

working in the collaterals toward the pulpit, or away from the pulpit.

You can tell very quickly. If, when a man comes back from his garden, his lectures, his journeys, and his æsthetic studies, or from his scientific coteries and *séances*, he finds himself less interested in his proper work, if the Sabbath is getting to be rather a burdensome day to him, and it is irksome to be preaching, he must quit one or other of those things. The streams run from the pulpit instead of into it. But if, when a man feels he is called to be an architect of men, an artist among men, in moulding them; when one feels that his life-power is consecrated to transforming the human soul toward the higher ideal of character for time and eternity, he looks around upon the great forces of the world and says to them, "You are my servants"; to the clouds, "Give me what you have of power"; to the hills, "Bring me of your treasures"; to all that is beautiful, "Come and put your garment upon me"; and to all that is enjoyable, "Fill me with force and give abundance to the fulness of my feeling," — if a man makes himself master of the secrets of nature that he may have power and strength to do his work, — then he is not carrying on three or four kinds of business at the same time. He is carrying on *one business*, and he collects from a hundred the materials and forces by which he does it.

That is right. It will do you no hurt, but will benefit you, if you will make yourself familiar with public affairs. But you must not let public affairs settle down on you and smother you. You must keep yourself abreast of science; but you must be surer of your faith

than science is of its details. You must see to it that you are the master of everything, and not it the master of you. If music is more to you than your duties, it is dangerous ; but it ought to be a shame to you that it is dangerous. If genial society and the flow of social merriment is sweet to you, and it seduces you from your work, it is perilous, — but it is a shame that these things should so easily overcome you. You ought to build yourselves on a pattern so broad that you can take all these things along with you. They are the King's ; and you have a right to them. You have a right to be a child with children ; the best fellow among young men. You have a right to all manly recreations, but you must see to it that you are stronger than the whole of them. You have a right to feel like other men, and to take part in all their interests, but you must be larger than them all. You must feel that you are charged with the realities of the great world that is hanging over our heads, — and, my God, such a world ! that never says anything ; that keeps silence above us, while the destinies of the ages have been rolling onward ; and where there are such things going on, that I marvel no sound ever drops down to us. But if a man lives and has seen Him that is invisible, and It that is invisible, all these lower things are open books unto him ; and, instead of weakening, they become elements of strength and power.

EXTERNAL HINDRANCES.

A man may spend one half the strength of his life trying to overcome obstacles that interpose between himself and men, which is absolutely unnecessary. I

told Brother Storrs in his church edifice that, with all his splendid success, I thought one full third of his life was spent in overcoming the natural resistance of that church structure to the gospel; not because it was beautiful, for I think a beautiful church is a help, but because it was constructed on the principle of isolation or wide separation, — as though a man should sit one side of a river and try to win a mistress on the other side, bawling out his love at the top of his voice. However she might have been inclined, one such shout would be too much for tender sentiment.

Churches are built now on the same principle as they formerly were, in the days of the founders of the old cathedrals. Then the services turned on the effect of music, and the production of awe by the shimmering lights, by the dimness and vagueness. They turned on the presentation of gorgeous apparel and all kinds of things for the eye to behold; but there was very little preaching, very little. Because they built their churches on a cruciform plan, we — who have revolutionized old theories, who believe that a church is a household, and that a preacher has a personal influence upon men, and is not a mere machine — build our churches just like them. You will see, in every cultivated community, churches built for modern preaching purposes on mediæval principles.

We will take the church in New York called the Broadway Tabernacle. In it there are two lines of columns which hide a range of six pews, on each side straight from the pulpit clear through to the corner of the church, where the men and women cannot see the preacher on account of these architectural adjuncts

which run up to the ceiling and make the church so beautiful. There the people can sit and look at the columns during the whole of the sermon-time.

In Dr. Storrs's church in Brooklyn* there was formerly a space of from fifteen to twenty feet between the pulpit and the pews. It has been changed. But formerly you could see the minister only down to his chest. He stood in that box, stuck up against the wall, and then came a great space, like the desert of Sahara; and over on the other side of it began to be his audience. Before he can fill such a space the magnetic influence of the man is all lost. He has squandered one of the best natural forces of the pulpit.

That is not the worst of it. When a man is made by God he is made *all over*, and every part is necessary to each and to the whole. A man's whole form is a part of his public speaking. His feet speak and so do his hands. You put a man in one of these barrelled pulpits, where there is no responsibility laid upon him as to his body, and he falls into all manner of gawky attitudes, and rests himself like a country horse at a hitching-post. He sags down, and has no consciousness of his awkwardness. But bring him out on a platform, and see how much more manly he becomes, how much more force comes out! The moment a man is brought face to face with other men, then does the influence of each act and react upon the other. I have seen workmen talking on the street, stooping, laughing, and slapping their hands on their knees. Why, their very gestures were a good oration, although I did not hear a word that was said. A man who speaks right before

* "The Church of the Pilgrims."

his audience, and without notes, will speak, little by little, with the gestures of the whole body, and not with the gestures of one finger only.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

No man will speak long with any interest when he thinks about himself. You may have the very best of sermons, but if your boot pinches or you have a painful corn, you will think about the boot and about the corn, and not about the sermon. A man needs to be brought out of himself as much as possible. You must relieve him from all manner of external embarrassment. Put a man where he is liable, as I have been, standing on the head of a barrel at a political meeting, to go through, and what will he think of? Now, on a little narrow platform one *can* walk backward and forward to be sure, but if he go toward the edges ever so little, he is in fear of stumbling off. Yet even that is better than a box-pulpit. What has that to do with preaching? What do you want with it? What is it for?

This evil is not confined to pulpits merely, but to all places where a speaker has to address a large body of men. I think the matter so important, that I tell the truth, and lie not, when I say that I would not accept a settlement in a very advantageous place, if I was obliged to preach out of one of those old-fashioned swallow's-nests on the wall.

NEARNESS TO THE AUDIENCE.

The next point you should look to is to have your pews as near as possible to the speaker. A preacher must be a man among men. There is a force — call it

magnetism, or electricity, or what you will — in a man, which is a personal element, and which flows from a speaker who is *en rapport* with his audience. This principle should be utilized in the work of preaching. I do not say that Jonathan Edwards could not have preached under the pulpit disadvantage. He could have preached out of anything. But there are not many men like Jonathan Edwards. The average man needs all the extraneous advantages he can press into his service.

People often say, "Do you not think it is much more inspiring to speak to a large audience than a small one?" No, I say; I can speak just as well to twelve persons as to a thousand, provided those twelve are crowded around me and close together, so that they touch each other. But even a thousand people, with four feet space between every two of them, would be just the same as an empty room. Every lecturer will understand what I mean, who has ever seen such audiences and addressed them. But crowd your audience together, and you will set them off with not half the effort.

Brother Day, the son of old President Day, of Yale College, was one of my right-hand men in founding the Plymouth Church in Brooklyn; and being a civil engineer, and the church having voted to build, he went into my study with me to plan the edifice. He asked me what I wanted, in the first place, and how many people I wanted the church to seat. I told him. "Very good," he said; "and how do you want them located?" "I want them to surround me, so that they will come up on every side, and behind me, so

that I shall be in the centre of the crowd, and have the people surge all about me." The result is, that there is not a better constructed hall in the world for the purposes of speaking and hearing than Plymouth Church. Charles Dickens, after giving one of his readings in it, sent me special word not to build any other hall for speaking; that Plymouth Church was perfect. It is perfect, because it was built on a principle, — the principle of social and personal magnetism, which emanates reciprocally from a speaker and from a close throng of hearers. This is perhaps the most important element of all the external conditions conducive to good and effective preaching.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Rev. Dr. Bacon. — Would you recommend the hanging of one or two architects by court-martial?

Mr. Beecher. — I do not know that a court-martial would be the proper tribunal by which to try them, but I would at least make them recite the Westminster Catechism every morning as a punishment. Architects, however, do a great deal of good work. They certainly help, by the exterior of churches, to beautify our towns and villages. But there is a certain thing that I never found an architect to be wise about, — ventilation. I never knew anybody else who was. There is no difficulty in ventilating a house when there is nobody in it. The difficulty is to have a house full of people, and then to ventilate it. How can you get fresh air into a room, after letting out the bad air? Draughts will be caused, and people will take cold. That question architects have never been able to solve.

In reference to prayer-meetings, this lecture has a bearing which I may as well mention here. One of the great difficulties with them ordinarily is that people are so separated as to lose the whole social element. You will notice that, after a prayer-meeting, which has been very dull and very stiff and very proper, has been closed, and the brethren gather around the stove, they commence talking socially among themselves, and then it is that the real conference-meeting begins. One deacon says, "Brother So-and-so, when you were speaking on such a topic you said so and so." He goes on and makes quite an effective little talk, but you could not have dragged it out of him with an ox-team during the meeting; and so one and another will speak up and join in, and they will get warmly interested in their discussion. Around the stove was the real meeting. The other was the mere *simulacrum* of a meeting.

IV.

THE STUDY OF HUMAN NATURE.

February 8, 1872.

MY impression is that preachers are quite as well acquainted with human nature as the average of well-informed citizens, but far less than lawyers, or merchants, or teachers, or, especially, politicians. The preachers of America have been, I think, as intelligent and successful as any that ever lived. As a body of men they have been upright, discreet, and wise in the general management of the affairs of Christian churches. As a body, they have in their personal and administrative or pastoral relations been, on the whole, sagacious in matters pertaining to human nature. Nevertheless, *Preachers*, both English and American, have not preached to man's nature, as it is.

It is true that in the *applications* of sermons, particularly such as are known in America as Revival Sermons, much knowledge of human nature is shown, and efficient use is made of it. But, in a larger generalization, it may be said that there have been but two schools of Preachers. One may be called the Ecclesiastical school; in which term I include the whole

body of men who regard the Church on earth as something to be administered, and themselves as channels, in some sense, of Divine grace, to direct the flow of that Divine institution. Ecclesiastical preachers are those who administer largely and preach incidentally, if one might say so. There is also the Dogmatic school of Preachers, or those who have relied upon a pre-existing system of truth, which has been founded before their day and handed down from generation to generation, and who apparently proceed upon the supposition that their whole duty is discharged when they have made a regular and repetitious statement of all the great points of doctrine from time to time.

NECESSITIES OF THE FUTURE.

Now, the school of the future (if I am a prophet, and I am, of course, satisfied in my own mind that I am !) is what may be called a *Life School*. This style of preaching is to proceed, not so much upon the theory of the sanctity of the Church and its ordinances, or upon a pre-existing system of truth which is in the Church somewhere or somehow, as upon the necessity for all teachers, first, to study the strengths and the weaknesses of human nature minutely ; and then to make use of such portions of the truth as are required by the special needs of man, and for the development of the spiritual side of human nature over the animal or lower side — the preparation of man in his higher nature for a nobler existence hereafter. It is a life-school in this respect, that it deals not with the facts of the past, except in so far as they can be made food for the present and factors of the life that now is ; but rather studies to understand

men, and to deal with them, face to face and heart to heart, — yea, even to mold them as an artist molds his clay or carves his statue. And in regard to such a school as that, while there has been much done incidentally, the revised procedure of education yet awaits development and accomplishment; and I think that our profession is in danger, and in great danger, of going under, and of working effectively only among the relatively less informed and intelligent of the community; of being borne with, in a kind of contemptuous charity, or altogether neglected, by the men of culture who have been strongly developed on their moral side, — not their moral side as connected with revealed religion, but as connected rather with human knowledge and worldly wisdom. The question, then, comes up, Do men need this intimately practical instruction? and if so, must there be to meet it this life-school of preachers?

RELATION OF BIBLE TRUTH TO CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD.

But I am asked, "Have we not, in the truth as it has been revealed in Jesus Christ, everything that is needed? If a man take the Gospels, and the life and sayings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and preach these, is he not thoroughly furnished to every good work, and does he need to go outside of the Bible?" Yes, he does, for no man can take the inside of the Bible, if he does not know how to take the outside.

The kingdom of God and of truth, as it is laid down in the New Testament, is a kingdom of seeds. They have been sown abroad, and have been growing and de-

veloping in the world; and, whereas, when they were initiated they were but seminal forms, now they have spread like the banyan-tree. And shall I go back and talk about acorns after I have learned about oaks? Shall I undertake to say that the Infinite Truth that is in Jesus Christ is, all of it, comprised in the brief and fragmentary histories that are contained in the four Evangelists; that human life has been nothing; that there is no Providence or inspiration in the working of God's truth among mankind; no purposed connection between the history of the world for eighteen hundred years, vitalized by the presence of the Holy Ghost and those truths in the New Testament? All that Christianity has produced is a part of Christianity. All that has been evolved in human existence you may find as germ-forms in the Bible; but you must not shut yourselves up to those germ-forms, with stupid reverence merely for the literal text of the gospel. It is the gospel *alive*, the gospel as it has been made victorious in its actual conflict with man's lower nature, that you are to preach. What Christ is you are to learn, indeed, with all reverence, from the historic delineation of his sacred person and life; but also you are to read him in the suffering human heart, in the soul triumphant over suffering, in the self-sacrifice of the mother for her child, in the heroic father, in every man and woman who has learned from Christ some new development of glorious self-giving for noble purposes. These are the commentaries expounded to you, through which you shall be able to know Christ vitally. All human nature that has been impregnated with a knowledge of Christ is the Bible commentary which you have to

read in order to know who Christ is, and to learn that he is not shut up in the Gospels alone.

EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLES.

It is said that ministers ought not to know anything but "Jesus Christ and him crucified," but that is said in a different manner from that of the Apostle. He did not say, "I preach nothing but the historical Christ and him crucified." He said that he put the whole dependence of his ministry upon the force that was generated from Christ and him crucified; and not upon his own personal power, presence, or eloquence. He relied upon the living presence of Almighty God, as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. He depended upon moral power; and it is a perversion to say that men are to preach nothing but the literal, textual Christ, or the literal, textual four Gospels, or the literal, textual Epistles; for all of life is open to you. You have a right to preach from everything, from the stars in the zenith to the lowest form of creation upon earth. All things belong to you, for you are Christ's. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it. The Lord is our Father, and therefore we are heirs.

It is also said, "Are we wiser than the Apostles were?" I hope so. I should be ashamed if we were not. "Are we better preachers than they were?" Yes, we ought to be better preachers in our time than they would be. They were adapted to their times, admirably; but I think it is as much a misapplication of things to bring down literally the arguments of the Apostles from Jerusalem to our times, as it would have been, were it possible, to carry back all the scien-

tific knowledge, and all the developed political economy which we now have, and preach them in old Jerusalem, within the Temple. We should be barbarians to them, and they would be comparative barbarians to us. *Adaptation to the times in which we live*, is the law of Providence. The Apostles were adapted to their times. We must be similarly adapted, — not in a passive, servile way, but in a living, active way, and by taking an interest in the things which men do now. What did the Apostles preach? Did they not preach like Jews to Jews, and Greeks to Greeks? They had liberty, and they took the things they found to be needful in their time, to the people to whom they ministered. The following of the Apostolic example is not to pursue, blindly, their external forms, but to follow the light of their humanity and that of the gospel. This was the example they set: Whatever tended to elevate men from the lower to the higher sphere, the Apostles thought lawful for them to employ in their ministry.

You may ask if they did not understand human nature without all the study that I am recommending. I think that they did understand a great deal of human nature. It does not follow, however, that you should not attempt to understand as much and more than they did; for such an argument as that would really be not only against a more scientific basis of knowledge of human nature for the modern preacher, but against all development of every kind, against all growth, against all culture and all refinement. You must not pattern yourselves on the antique models, altogether, except in principle.

WEAKNESS OF GOSPEL-PREACHING IN THE PAST.

It is said by some, "Has not Christianity been preached by plain men, who did not understand so very much about human nature, in every age of the world?" It has; and what have eighteen hundred years to show for it? To-day three fourths of the globe is heathen, or but semi-civilized. After eighteen hundred years of preaching of the faith under the inspiration of the living Spirit of God, how far has Christianity gone in the amelioration of the condition of the race? I think that one of the most humiliating things that can be contemplated, one of the things most savory to the scorner, and which seems the most likely to infuse a sceptical spirit into men, is to look at the pretensions of the men who boast of the progress of their work, and then to look at their performances. I concede that there has been a great deal done, and there has been a great deal of preparation for more; but the torpors, the vast retrocessions, the long lethargic periods, and the wide degeneration of Christianity into a kind of ritualistic mummery and conventional usage, show very plainly that the past history of preaching Christianity is not to be our model. We must find a better mode.

SPECIAL REASONS FOR STUDYING HUMAN NATURE.

We need to study human nature, in the first place, because it illustrates the Divine nature, which we are to interpret to men. Divine attribute corresponds to our idea of human faculty. The terms are analogous. You cannot interpret the Divine nature except through

some knowledge of human nature. There are those who believe that God transcends men, not simply in quality and magnitude, but in kind. Without undertaking to confirm or deny this, I say that the only part of the Divine nature that we can understand is that part which corresponds to ourselves, and that all which lies outside of what we can recognize is something that never can be interpreted by us. It is not within our reach. Whatever it may be, therefore, of God, that by searching we can find out, all that we interpret, and all that we can bring, in its moral influence, to bear upon men, is in its study but a higher form of human mental philosophy.

Now, let us see what government is. It is the science of managing men. What is moral government? It is moral science, or the theory upon which God manages men. What is the management of men, again, but a thing founded upon human nature? So that to understand moral government you are run right back to the same necessity. You must comprehend that on which God's moral government itself stands, which is human nature.

But, again, the fundamental doctrine on which our labors stand is the need of the transformation of man's nature by the Divine Spirit. This is altogether a question of psychology. The old theological way of stating man's sinfulness, namely, "Total Depravity," was so gross and so undiscriminating, and was so full of endless misapprehensions, that it has largely dropped out of use. Men no longer are accustomed, I think, to use that term as once they did. That all men are sinful, is taught; but "what is meant by 'sinful'?" is the ques-

tion which immediately comes back. Instantly the schools begin to discuss it. Is it a state of the fibre of the substance or the soul? Is it any aberration, any excess, any disproportion of natural elements? Wherein does the fault lie? What is it? The moment you discuss this, you are discussing human nature. It is the mind you are discussing. In order to know what is an aberration, you must know what is normal. In order to know what is in excess, you must know what is the true measure. Who can tell whether a man is selfish, unless he knows what is benevolent? Who can tell whether a man has departed from the correct idea, unless he has some conception of that idea? The very foundation on which you stand to-day necessitates knowledge of man as its chief basis.

Consider, too, how a minister, teaching the moral government of God, the nature of God, and the condition of man and his necessities, is obliged to approach the human soul. Men are sluggish, or are so occupied and filled with what are to them important interests, that, ordinarily, when a preacher comes into a community, he finds it either slumbering, or averse to his message, or indifferent to it; and, in either case, his business is to stimulate the moral nature. But how shall he know the art of stimulating man's moral nature who has never studied it? You must arouse men and prepare them to be molded. How can you do it if you know nothing about them?

A man who would minister to a diseased body must have an accurate knowledge of the organs, and of the whole structure of the body, in a sanitary condition. We oblige our physicians to know anatomy and physi-

ology. We oblige them to study morbid anatomy, as well as normal conditions. We say that no man is prepared to practise without this knowledge, and the law interferes, or does as far as it can, to compel it. Now, shall a man know how to administer to that which is a thousand times more subtle and important than the body, and which is the exquisite blossom of the highest development and perfection of the human system, namely, the mind in its modern development, — shall he assume to deal with that, and raise and stimulate it, being ignorant of its nature? A man may know the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, he may know every theological treatise from the day of Augustine to the day of Dr. Taylor, and if he does not understand human nature, he is not fit to preach.

Suppose a man should undertake to cut off your leg because he had been a tool-maker. He had made lancets, probes, saws, and that sort of thing, all his life; but he had never seen a man's leg amputated, and did not know exactly where the arteries or veins lie. Suppose he should think that making surgeons' tools fitted him to be a surgeon; would it? The surgeon must know his tools and how to handle them, but he must know, too, the system on which he is going to use them. And shall a man, charged with the care of the soul, sharpen up his understanding with moral distinctions and learned arguments, and know all about the theories of theology from Adam down to our day, and yet know nothing of the organism upon which all these instrumentalities are to be used? Shall he know nothing about man himself? The student who goes out to his work with a wide knowledge of theology

and no knowledge of human nature is not half fitted for his duty. One reason why so many succeed is, that although they have no formal instruction in human nature, they have learned much in the family, and in the school, and by other indirect methods, and so have a certain stock — I might say an illegitimate stock — of knowledge, but one which was not provided in the system of their studies.

If I might be allowed to criticise the general theological course, or to recommend anything in relation to it, I should say that one of the prime constituents of the training should be a study of the human soul and body from beginning to end. We must arouse and stimulate men, and seek to bring them into new relations with truth, with ourselves, and with the community.

Every man has a right to go to you, if you are a minister who has aroused him to a sense of his relations with God, and say to you: "Now, my circumstances and temptations are thus and so; give me some sort of a chart for my future guidance." But how can you, if you know nothing about human nature? You leave him to fumble his way along the best he can. There is no special chart for him at your hands. Every man has to run his ship in a channel peculiar to himself. There never were two men in the world that could follow each other like two ships being piloted into New York harbor. No two men are alike; therefore, each man has to adapt to himself that which is brought to him for his own special use and improvement. What many men need is that their minister shall be able to form such an analysis of their nature that he can suggest where such a development should be repressed, and where another

should be stimulated, and tell the man how to use himself, socially as well as morally. Shall a man be born like a little child into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and then be left to shift for himself — as men mostly are, after being admitted into the church and talked to for a few weeks — after the revival has spent its force? Shall they be left to return to their own uninstructed devices, and find their way, during the rest of their lives, as best they can? Thanks to the real intelligence of the community and to the heads of families, there is a great deal of progress made in this direction; but how far it arises from a true ideal of preaching and the administration of the truth in the hands of wise preachers, I cannot say.

How few ministers are there who can really comfort men, and how much need of comforting there is in this world! How the office of comforter has fallen into disuse! How much nobler woman is than man in the administration of this gospel-gift from Jesus Christ! Woman is ordained to perform many things much better than man, on account of her superior delicacy of organization and keenness of perception. Woman is a better instructor, from her very make and education, and as the molder and trainer of children in the household is by far man's superior.

THE WORLD'S ADVANCEMENT IN THOUGHT.

There is another consideration that we cannot blink, and that is, that we are in danger of having the intelligent part of society go past us. The study of human nature is not going to be left in the hands of the church or the ministry. It is going to be a part of every sys-

tem of liberal education, and will be pursued on a scientific basis. There is being now applied among scientists a greater amount of real, searching, discriminating thought, tentative and experimental, to the whole structure and functions of man and the method of the development of mental force, than ever has been expended upon it in the whole history of the world put together. More men are studying it, and they are coming to results, and these results are starting, directly or indirectly, a certain kind of public thought and feeling. In religion, the psychological school of mental philosophers are not going to run in the old grooves of Christian doctrine ; they are not going to hold the same generic ideas respecting men. And if ministers do not make their theological systems conform to facts as they are, if they do not recognize what men are studying, the time will not be far distant when the pulpit will be like the voice crying in the wilderness. And it will not be " Prepare the way of the Lord," either. This work is going to be done. The providence of God is rolling forward a spirit of investigation that Christian ministers must meet and join. There is no class of people upon earth who can less afford to let the development of truth run ahead of them than they. You cannot wrap yourselves in professional mystery, for the glory of the Lord is such that it is preached with power throughout all the length and breadth of the world, by these investigators of his wondrous creation. You cannot go back and become apostles of the dead past, drivelling after ceremonies, and letting the world do the thinking and studying. There must be a new spirit infused into the ministry. Some men are so afraid

that, in breaking away from the old systems and original forms and usages, Christianity will get the go-by! Christianity is too vital, too really Divine in its innermost self, to fear any such results. There is no trouble about Christianity. You take care of yourselves and of men, and learn the truth as God shows it to you all the time, and you need not be afraid of Christianity; that will take care of itself. You might as well be afraid that battles would rend the sky, or that something would stop the rising and setting of the sun. The power of Divine love and mercy is not going to be stopped, and will certainly not be stopped by the things that are true.

You cannot afford to shut your eyes to the truths of human nature. Every Christian minister is bound to fairly look at these things. Every scientific man who is studying human nature is bound to open his eyes and ears, and to study all its phenomena. I read that Huxley refused to attend a *séance* of Spiritualists. He said, contemptuously, that it was a waste of time, and gave expression to other sentiments of disdain. I am not an adherent of the spiritual doctrines; I have never seen my way clear to accept them. But phenomena which are wrapping up millions of men and vitally affecting their condition are not to be disdained by scientific men, whose business it is to study phenomenology of all kinds. No scientific man can rightly refuse to examine them. He may say that he has no time to do it, and that some other man must investigate them. That would be right. All men cannot do all things. But to speak of anything of this kind with contempt is not wise. I am not afraid to look at this

thing, or anything. I am not afraid that we are going to have the New Testament taken away from us. We must be more industrious in investigation, more honest in deduction, and more willing to take the truth in its new fullness; and we must be imbued with that simplicity in faith and truth which we inculcate in our people.

HOW TO STUDY HUMAN NATURE.

With this general statement of the necessity of the study of the human nature and mind in its structure and functions, I will pass on to the next point, which is the way in which this study is to be prosecuted. How are we going about it?

In the first place, you must study facts, scientifically. I think that such works as Bain's, while criticisable in many directions, are nevertheless works of very great interest as showing a wise tendency in the investigation of the mind of man, — the founding of mental philosophy upon physiology. I do not commend the system in all its particulars, but I speak of its tendency, which is in the right direction. I would say the same, also, of Herbert Spencer's works. There is much in him that I believe will be found sovereign and noble in the final account of truth, when our knowledge of it is rounded up. There was never a field of wheat that ripened which did not have a good deal of straw and husk with it. I doubt not but Herbert Spencer will have much straw and husk that will need to be burned. Nevertheless, the direction he is moving in is a wise one, which is the study of human nature, of the totality of man.

It was believed once that man did not think by the brain. I believe that notion has gone by. Most men now admit that the brain is the organ of the mind. It is held that it cannot be partitioned off into provinces, and that there are no external indications of its various functions. I shall not dispute that question with you. It is now generally conceded that there is an organization which we call the nervous system in the human body, to which belong the functions of emotion, intelligence, and sensation, and that that is connected intimately with the whole circulation of the blood, with the condition of the blood as affected by the liver and by aëration in the lungs; that the manufacture of the blood is dependent upon the stomach. So a man is what he is, not in one part or another, but all over; one part is intimately connected with the other, from the animal stomach to the throbbing brain; and when a man thinks, he thinks the whole trunk through. Man's power comes from the generating forces that are in him, namely, the digestion of nutritious food into vitalized blood, made fine by oxygenation; an organization by which that blood has free course to run and be glorified; a neck that will allow the blood to flow up and down easily; a brain properly organized and balanced; the whole system so compounded as to have susceptibilities and recuperative force; immense energy to generate resources and facility to give them out; — all these elements go to determine what a man's working power is. And shall a man undertake to study human nature, everything depending upon his knowledge of it, and not study the prime conditions under which human nature must exist?

I have often seen young ministers sit at the table, and even those of sixty years of age, eating out of all proportion, beyond the necessities of their systems; and I have seen, on the other hand, ministers who ate below the necessities of their systems, under a vague impression that sanctifying grace wrought better on an empty stomach than on a full one. It seems to me that all Divine grace and Divine instruments honor God's laws everywhere; and that the best condition for grace in the mental system is that in which the human body is in a perfect state of health. That is a question which every man can best settle for himself. Some men under-sleep, and some over-sleep; some eat too much, and some too little. Some men use stimulants who do not need them, while others avoid them who need them, and would be better for their use. There is a vast amount of truth relative to the individual that is not studied by the minister, though it ought to be, as to the incoming and the outflow of force. Some clergymen prepare themselves to preach on Sunday by sitting up very late on Saturday night, and exhausting their vitality, thus compelling themselves to force their overtasked powers to extraordinary exertion to perform their Sabbath duties; which entails upon them the horrors of Blue Monday, the result of a spasmodic and drastic excitement. It is, and it ought to be, a purgatory to them. You must study yourselves as men. Is there no self-knowledge that can be acquired, so that a man shall know how to be merciful to his beast?

You see that whatever relates to the whole organization of the human body and its relations to health and

to perfect symmetry must be studied, for all these relations are intimate, and concern both your own working powers and the material among men that you will have to work on.

METAPHYSICAL STUDIES.

In studying mental philosophy after this fashion I would not have you ignore metaphysics. The perceptions of those subtle relations, near and remote, specific and generic, that obtain among spiritual facts of different kinds, I understand to be metaphysics; and that, I suppose, must be studied. I think it sharpens men, and renders them familiar with the operations of the human mind, if not carried too far, and gives them a grasp and penetration that they would not get otherwise. It is favorable to moral insight, when developed in connection with the other sides of human nature. While I say that you ought to study mental philosophy with a strong physiological side to it, I do not wish it to be understood that I decry mental philosophy with a strong metaphysical side to it.

PHRENOLOGY AS A CONVENIENT BASIS.

There is one question beyond that. The importance of studying both sides of mental philosophy for the sake of religious education is one point; but when the question comes up *how* to study mental philosophy, I do not know anything that can compare in facility of usableness with phrenology. I do not suppose that phrenology is a perfect system of mental philosophy. It hits here and there. It needs revising, as, in its present shape, it is crude; but nevertheless

when it becomes necessary to talk to people about themselves, I know of no other nomenclature which so nearly expresses what we need, and which is so facile in its use, as phrenology. Nothing can give you the formulated analysis of mind as that can. Now let me say, particularly, a few things about this, and personally, too. I suppose I inherited from my father a tendency or intuition to read man. The very aptitude that I recognize in myself for the exercise of this power would indicate a pre-existing tendency. In my junior college year I became, during the visit of Spurzheim, enamored of phrenology. For twenty years, although I have not made it a special study, it has been the foundation on which I have worked. Admit, if you please, it is not exactly the true thing; and admit, if you will, that there is little form or system in it; yet I have worked with it much as botanists worked with the Linnæan system of botany, the classification of which is very convenient, although an artificial one. There is no natural system that seems to correspond to human nature so nearly as phrenology does.

For example, you assume that a man's brain is the general organ of the spiritual and intellectual functions.

I see a man with a small brow and big in the lower part of his head, like a bull, and I know that that man is not likely to be a saint. All the reasoning in the world would not convince me of the contrary, but I would say of such a man, that he had very intense ideas, and would bellow and push like a bull of Bashan. Now, practically, do you suppose I would commence to treat with such a man by flaunting a rag in his face? My first instinct in regard to him is what a man would

have if he found himself in a field with a wild bull, which would be to put himself on good manners, and use means of conciliation, if possible.

On the other hand, if I see a man whose forehead is very high and large, but who is thin in the back of the head, and with a small neck and trunk, I say to myself, That is a man, probably, whose friends are always talking about how much there is in him, but who never does anything. He is a man who has great organs, but nothing to drive them with. He is like a splendid locomotive without a boiler.

Again, you will see a man with a little bullet-head, having accomplished more than that big-headed man, who ought to have been a strong giant and a great genius. The bullet-headed man has outstripped the broad-browed man in everything he undertook; and people say, "Where is your phrenology?" In reply, I say, "Look at that bullet-headed man, and see what he has to drive his bullet-head with!" His stomach gives evidence that he has natural forces to carry forward his purposes. Then look at the big-headed man. He can't make a spoonful of blood in twenty-four hours, and what he does make is poor and thin. Phrenology classifies the brain regions well enough, but you must understand its relations to physiology, and the dependence of brain-work upon the quantity and quality of blood that the man's body makes.

You may ask, "What is the use of knowing these things?" All the use in the world. If a person comes to me, with dark, coarse hair, I know he is tough and enduring, and I know that, if it is necessary, I can hit him a rap to arouse him; but if I see a person who has

fine silky hair, and a light complexion, I know that he is of an excitable temperament, and must be dealt with soothingly. Again, if I see one with a large blue watery eye, and its accompanying complexion, I say to myself that all Mount Sinai could not wake that man up. I have seen men of that stamp, whom you could no more stimulate to action, than you could a lump of dough by blowing a resurrection trump over it.

Men are like open books, if looked at properly. Suppose I attempt to analyze a man's deeds; I can do it with comparative facility, because I have in my eye the general outline of the man's disposition and mental tendencies. A deed is like a letter stamped from a die. The motive that directs the deed is like the matrix that molds the stamp. You may know the mold from the impression made by the stamp. You must know what men are, in order to reach them, and that is a part of the science of preaching. If there is any profession in the world that can afford to be without this practical knowledge of human nature, it certainly is *not* the profession of a preacher.

While I urge the study of man from the scientific side, let me say, also, that this study is not enough, and that what we need is not simply this elementary analytical knowledge. We must study human nature for constructive purposes, also. That is the difference between a true preacher and an incompetent one.

The lawyer must study human nature, in order to get at the facts of his case; the merchant, for the sake of his own profits; the politician, for the sake of carrying out certain political ends; but these do not imply that men are to be made better or worse. A minister

studies human nature for the purpose of *regenerating men.* We study men as florists do flowers, when they wish to change them from simple blossoms into rare beauties. The object of the florist is to make them larger, to enhance their color or fragrance, or whatever other change is desired. It is to make more out of human nature than we originally find in it, that we are studying it and training it.

SOCIAL HABITS.

You must be familiar with men; and you are fortunate if you have been brought up in a public school. There is a good deal of human nature learned by boys among boys, and by young men among young men. That is one of the arguments in favor of large gatherings of young men. A man who has struggled out from between the stones of the farm, and has fought his way through the academy, with the pity of everybody, — a pity which might well be spared, because it was God's training, — has a fine education for practical life, because he knows men. The study of man is the highest of sciences.

Besides this general knowledge we are to have, we should take kindly to individual men, for the very purpose of studying them. Now, I take great delight, if ever I can get a chance, in riding on the top of an omnibus with the driver, and talking with him. What do I gain by that? Why, my sympathy goes out for these men, and I recognize in them an element of brotherhood, — that great human element which lies underneath all culture, which is more universal and more important than all special attributes, which is the

great generic bond of humanity between man and man. If ever I saw one of those men in my church, I could preach to him, and hit him under the fifth rib with an illustration, much better than if I had not been acquainted with him. I have driven the truth under many a plain jacket. But, what is more, I never found a plain man in this world who could not tell me many things that I did not know before. There is not a gate-keeper at the Fulton Ferry, or an engineer or deck-hand on the boats, that I am not acquainted with, and they help me in more ways than they know of. If you are going to be a minister, keep very close to plain folks; don't get above the common people.

There is no danger that you will lose your sympathy with culture and refinement, as some people seem to fear. There is no danger that you will lose your purity and sensitiveness. There will be nothing incompatible in this course with the performance of your professional duties as a preacher. Good-heartedness and good, plain, hearty sympathy with men, will help everything in you which ought to be helped, and diminish those things which ought to be diminished. Study human nature by putting yourself in alliance with men. See how a mother, that best of philosophers in practical matters, understands every one of her children and the special differences between them all; and does she not carry herself with true intuition as to their daily needs, and with the interpreting philosophy of sensitive love? She is the best trainer of men, and has the best mental philosophy, so far as practical things are concerned.

There is but one other point. While you study men scientifically, in regard to the fundamental elements

of human nature, and again by sympathies and kindly relations to individuals to learn them well, you must be much among them, generally. You must act with men. Learn to be needful to them and to use them. A minister who stays in his study all the week long, and makes his appearance only in his pulpit to preach, may do some good, of a certain sort; but the preacher must be a man among men. Keep out among the people. I do not mean to say that you ought to make a great many pastoral visits, but that society — men, women, and children, of all sorts — ought to be your continual and familiar acquaintances. Books alone are not enough. Studying is not enough. There is a training for you in the actual daily contact with men, of mind with mind, which will keep you down, and you will not have so much professional pride. You will find many men abler than you, and a good many men who are better qualified to teach grace to you than you are to teach them. You will often find how very superficial has been your teaching to men. No man will find a better study than where the drooping heart is laid bare to him, or where the ever-flashing intelligence is acting in his presence. There you can see what your work has been, and what it is to be in the future.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Can a minister be eminent both as a pastor and as a preacher?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes. It will depend, however, upon how large his pastorate is, and how much he undertakes to do. A man may not be able to take a large care of

individual souls, and yet study in such a way as to be able to meet the exigencies of a city pulpit, or any labor of that kind which requires exceeding freshness and newness; he must make an average. He must keep up his pulpit, but at the same time he must keep up his knowledge of human nature, and if he can have no substitute or assistant he must do pastoral work. I do very little of it myself, but have many assistants, and the work is done.

Q. Has not science demonstrated that phrenology is imperfect?

Mr. Beecher.— I do not know that science has demonstrated it. Those who are best acquainted with it are conscious that with some crudenesses it contains a great many elements of truth, and that it is one of the tendencies in the right direction; and when the knowledge of the human mind shall be finally made clear, I think it will be found that much has been owing to phrenology.

Q. Would you recommend the study of Hebrew as part of a theological course?

Mr. Beecher. — There are a great many who are naturally called to scholarship, and who should educate themselves with a view to contribute to the learning of the day. A man who has that turn of mind is wise to study Hebrew. Some study of it is beneficial in other respects. I do not think that the amount of study required in our theological seminaries will hurt anybody. You need not scoff at any part of the study as if it were a surplusage. There is nothing that is taught here that you will not thank God for in the

course of your life. You can save yourselves a vast amount of trouble hereafter by faithful study now.

Q. How much time ought a minister to spend in examining his text in the original?

Mr. Beecher. — Well, just as much as is necessary to get the real spirit of the text, and that will depend upon yourself. If I should conclude to study my text from the Old Testament, in Hebrew, I think it would take me most of the week to ascertain what it was! I get along better with the New Testament.

Question by Dr. Bacon. — How far should a preacher imitate the example of Christ, and give utterance to truths which are disagreeable to the hearer?

Mr. Beecher. — No rule whatever can be given in regard to that. Whatever provocation arises from the preacher's manner or untowardness, of course, is blameworthy in him. If he will speak truths meet for persons to hear, let him learn "speaking the truth in love." Instruct in meekness those who oppose you, for peradventure God shall give them repentance. And if you are speaking the truth, it is essential that those who hear you believe you are sincere before you can work with them.

But manner is much. In the early abolition days two men went out preaching, one an old Quaker, and another a young man full of fire. When the Quaker lectured, everything ran along very smoothly, and he carried the audience with him. When the young man lectured, there was a row, and stones, and eggs. It became so noticeable that the young man spoke to the Quaker about it. He said, "Friend, you and I are on

the same mission, and preach the same things: and how is it that while you are received cordially I get nothing but abuse?" The Quaker replied, "I will tell thee. Thee says, 'If you do so and so, you shall be punished,' and I say, 'My friends, if you will *not* do so and so, you shall *not* be punished.'" They both said the same things, but there was a great deal of difference in the way they said it.

Q. Is it not true that Spurgeon is a follower of Calvin? and is he not an eminent example of success?

Mr. Beecher. — In spite of it, yes; but I do not know that the camel travels any better, or is any more useful as an animal, for the hump on its back.

Q. May not a man be too self-conscious in his preaching?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, but every preacher must watch his own tendencies, and labor to counteract the excess of them. In astronomy, they have always to make an equation of corrections. Every man has his own equation. The different nervous activities of men make a difference in the observations of different astronomers. Every great astronomer has his own personal equation, which is generally known. That must be calculated for, in using his observations. So, every minister ought to have his personal equation, and he ought to use it himself all the time. One man says, "I am inclined by nature to take the cautious and the fearful view." Now, he must take pains to look on the hopeful side of everything! Another man says, "I am inclined to benevolent views," and he must strive to bring out the conscience element. You see the application.

Q. What proportion of the study of human nature ought to be found in books, novels, etc.?

Mr. Beecher. — You can give no proportion, as you can in a physician's prescription, for the simple reason that men learn with different facilities. Some men will learn more in six months from free intercourse with people than other men will learn in six years. There is nothing in this world that will take away from a man the responsibility of finding out things for himself. The principle being given, you must find out what you yourself need in the different methods of working and the proportions of them.

V.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WORKING-ELEMENTS.

February 14, 1872.

IT is somewhat difficult to reduce to anything like precision many of the directions which I shall attempt to give you, young gentlemen, because your course will be determined so much by circumstances, that what might be true at one time would not be true at another.

CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES.

For instance, in regard to preaching, the field into which you go will have very much to do with it, both as to its manner and the preparation you will make for it. A man set in an uncultivated field in the far West, among the rude pioneers, would, both inwardly and outwardly, use a different method from that which he would employ in an old and cultivated community, where the church had been organized for a long time, and where the men and women had been well instructed — drilled, indeed — in casuistical and doctrinal theology, its principles and truths. You would not think of preaching elaborate sermons in doctrinal sequence, going among people who had been utterly unused to

any such course as this. In a new community good sense would teach you at once, and if it did not, necessity would very quickly teach you, that you could not preach as you would in the old pulpit. My early ministry was spent in the West, and I had the opportunity of seeing, time and again, ministers from parishes in the East, coming out into the scattered populations of the West, made up from every quarter of the world; and it was an edifying spectacle to see the amazement, the gradual awakening, the chagrin, the confusion, the embarrassment, the glimpse of hope, the putting out of the new method, the readaptation, and, finally, the successful issue of these new ministers into their new work; for they had to be acclimated, not in body alone, but in preaching as well. So, I say that what would help you on the supposition that you were to settle in the East might be of very little importance to you if you were going to settle West, in Montana, for instance, or in Texas, at the South.

WRITING AND EXTEMPORIZING.

Then, again, different personal temperaments and habits may have very much to do with your mode of preaching; and the ever-open question comes up, "Shall I write my sermons, or shall I extemporize?" That depends, to a very considerable extent, upon a man's temperament. If he be extremely sensitive and fastidious by nature, and, withal, somewhat secretive and cautious, it would frequently be almost impossible for him to extemporize with fluency. Sometimes men are so oppressed under the influence of an audience that they cannot possibly think in its presence. Drill and

long habit may alter this; but still, if it is rooted in a man's nature, he may never conquer it. And after all, the real thing for him to do is to *preach*, and whether he write his sermon or speak it without writing, let him see that he trains himself to do his work. This question is the same as asking, "Is it best for a man who is going hunting to take out cartridge-shells already loaded for his gun, or shall he take loose ammunition and load with powder and shot, according to circumstances, every time he is going to shoot?" Now that is a fair question, and there is a great deal to be said on the subject. But, after all, the man who goes where the game is, always finding it and bringing it home with him, is the best hunter; and I care not whether he carry fixed or loose ammunition. That is the best cat that catches the most rats. And in your case that will be the best form of sermon that does the work of a sermon the best. If you can do best by writing, write your sermons; and if you can do better by not writing, do not write them.

This merely by way of illustrating the difficulty there is in giving specific directions in matters of preaching.

VARIATIONS OF DENOMINATIONAL SERVICE.

There is another modifying circumstance that comes in, and that is the church economy through which you undertake to administer.

You go out into a community, and find it already organized. Some of you will very possibly officiate in the Episcopal Church, while others of you will find yourselves in the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, or

Congregational churches, and some even, perhaps, in the Roman Catholic Church.

Now you may ask, What difference does the church make? Is not man the same, no matter what church he is in? But really there are two great churches: those who believe that God works by the power of the truth, and according to the great natural laws; and those who believe, in addition to this, that he works through a church organization of a definite character, which has in it certain specified and ordained channels. And, in point of fact, in proportion as churches or parishes are organized according to this last belief will the amount of preaching be less. There is less of it for the obvious reason that the church economy requires so much time and labor in other directions. You have to keep going the great organism in which grace inheres, and you worship by means of certain forms, ordinances, sacraments, and persons, all of whom are, in a sense, sacred; and you are obliged to give a great deal of your attention and care to the administration of that economy.

You will find in the Episcopal Church — and I do not say whether it is best or not — that the average duration of the sermon is twenty or twenty-five minutes, the service occupying an hour and a half or two hours, not one eighth of which is occupied in preaching. They depend upon the reading of the Scriptures, upon their musical services, and upon their forms of prayer, the sermon being but a minor thing among many considered more important. On the other hand, churches like the Presbyterian, the Baptist, and the Congregational have no liturgy, and no elaborate church

service; they are obliged to emphasize that which they have, and the sermon becomes the chief thing in such denominations. That is the power they hold in their hand, and if they cannot wield that they can wield nothing; for besides that there is very little, I am sorry to say, that is effectual in the work of their ministry, — and that is the weak spot in our scheme.

Although there is a great deal of preaching in the Methodist Church (as developed under Wesleyan teachings), yet you will take notice that that is not all. While they preach a great deal, and put an emphasis upon it, yet, after all, they expect the main work to be done otherwise. When the preaching is over, they have a rousing good time in the social meeting, singing and praying, and *then* it is expected that men will be caught and brought into the church.

You will find that generally, in New England, they have run to preaching. Why? Because they had nothing else to run to. The pulpit was made everything of, and the whole economy of the church was barren outside of that. There was very little of singing, and what there was did not always minister to grace. The praying was sometimes most helpful, and sometimes not so much so; but after the reading of the Scriptures (and that, in my childhood, was not very much indulged in in parish churches), the main thing was preaching.

Now, if one goes into a community where the sermon is everything, and other things are almost nothing, of course his preaching will be very different from what it would be were he to go into an Episcopal or a Methodist Church, where there is a large economy besides

preaching, on which the minister depends for success in his labors. Again, you may have to build up a community. Or you may have to arouse them, — to loosen up the earth, and, as it were, take soil there, where the ground has been ploughed and worn out and abandoned, like old Virginia's soil. Or you may have to take new prairie soil and break it up yourself. All these things will determine your style of preaching. So, then, when you go away from here into your field of labor, you will find that it is only very little of what you have heard in the seminary that you can immediately apply. You must do things according to some principle of common-sense, aside from what you may have learned here. All these lessons that you are being taught in the seminary are of a great deal more importance to you than you believe now. You will think better of your theological training twenty years hence than to-day, perhaps. But, after all, mother-wit and a patient finding out of your road from day to day are going to teach you in the last instance, and they will be your best teachers.

THE POWER OF IMAGINATION.

Yet, despite all these necessary differences, there are certain important elements that enter into all ministries. And the first element on which your preaching will largely depend for power and success, you will perhaps be surprised to learn, is *Imagination*, which I regard as the most important of all the elements that go to make the preacher. But you must not understand me to mean the imagination as the creator of fiction, and still less as the factor of embellishment. The imagination in its relations to art and beauty is one thing; and

in its relations to moral truth it is another thing, of the most substantial character. Imagination of this kind is the true germ of faith; it is the power of conceiving as definite the things which are invisible to the senses, — of giving them distinct shape. And this, not merely in your own thoughts, but with the power of presenting the things which experience cannot primarily teach to other people's minds, so that they shall be just as obvious as though seen with the bodily eye.

Imagination of this kind is a most vital element in preaching. If we presented to people things we had seen, we should have all their bodily organism in our favor. My impression is, that the fountain of strength in every Christian ministry is the power of the minister himself to realize God present, and to present him to the people. No ministry can be long, various, rich, and fruitful, I think, except from that root. We hear a great deal about the breadth of the pulpit, and about the variety of the pulpit, and about carrying the truth home to men's hearts. I have said a great deal to you about it, and shall say more. I claim that the pulpit has a right and a duty to discuss social questions, — moral questions in politics, slavery, war, peace, and the intercourse of nations. It has a right to discuss commerce, industry, political economy; everything from the roof-tree to the foundation-stone of the household, and everything that is of interest in the State. You have a duty to speak of all these things. There is not so broad a platform in the world as the Christian pulpit, nor an air so free as the heavenly air that overhangs it. You have a right and a duty to preach on all these

things; but if you make your ministry to stand on them, it will be barren. It will be rather a lectureship than a Christian ministry. It will be secular and will become secularized. The real root and secret of power, after all, in the pulpit, is the preaching of the invisible God to the people as an ever-present God. The preacher, then, must have the greatness of the God-power in his soul; and when he is himself inspired with it, — and filled with it so familiarly that always and everywhere it is the influence under which he looks out at man, at pleasure, at honor, and at all the vicissitudes of human life, — still standing under the shadow of God's presence, he has the power of God with man when he comes to speak of the truths of the gospel as affecting human procedure. This power of conceiving of invisible things does not only precede in point of time, but it underlies, and is dynamically superior to, anything else.

Now, imagination is indispensable to the formation of any clear and distinct ideas of God the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost. For myself, I am compelled to say that I must form an ideal of God through his Son, Jesus Christ. Christ is indispensable to me. My nature needs to fashion the thought of God, though I know him to be a Spirit, into something that shall nearly or remotely represent that which I know. I hold before my mind a glorified form, therefore; but, after all the glory, whatever may be the nimbus and the effluence around about it, it is to me the form of a glorified man. And I therefore fashion to myself, out of the spirit, that which has to me, as it were, a Divine presence and a Divine being, namely, a Divine man

But now come the attributal elements, the fashioning of the disposition, and not only that, but a fashioning of the whole interior. I bring to you some day the face, in miniature, of one very beautiful. You look upon it, and say, "Who is that?" I describe the person and give you the name. You say, "It is a beautiful face." But you do not, after looking at it, feel that you are acquainted with the person. Now I will take you home with me and introduce you to the friend whose name belongs to this picture; but still you would not feel that you knew her. You salute her morning and evening, converse with her, and take part in the social festivities. You admire her tact, her delicacy, and her beauty. You say the acquaintance opens well. She seems to you very lady-like and attractive. On the Sabbath day the Bible-class assembles, and you go there with your friend. In the recitations and the low-toned conversations she shows great knowledge and moral feeling, a bright intellect, and marvellous discrimination. But, still, you do not feel that you know her. Then you fall sick, and experience that delicious interval just after a severe illness, which one sometimes has,—the coming dawn after a long night, heralding the morning of returning health. In that time the hours are to be filled up, and she becomes a ministering angel unto you. She is full of resources for your comfort. You notice the wisdom of her management, the power she has to stimulate thought, to play with the imagination, and to cheer the heart. I am not now speaking of one to whom you are to be affianced. It is not for you; only you are making the *acquaintance* of one whose *portrait* you had seen, but

nothing more. And by thus living in communion with you, she has affected you, little by little, in such a manner that it has been brought home to you; and you say, "I have found a friend!" Well, who was she? Did you *know* her when you first saw her portrait?

Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ when you merely see his portrait, as it were, in the Evangelists? Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ when you simply range through his words of wisdom, and take them, germ-words as they are, with all the fullness that you can? No, not until you have been intimate with him, and have had your hearts lifted up in their noblest elements into that serener air through which God only communicates. It is not until you have been in this atmosphere, not only on the Lord's day, but on the intervening days. It is not until, by the Holy Spirit, you have been made sensitive in every part, and the Lord Jesus Christ becomes chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. It is not until you have the power to transfuse Jesus Christ into your whole life that you know him, — until there is something in the morning dawn that brings you the thought of him, in the hush of the evening, at noon-time, in the budding and springing of the trees, in the singing of the birds, when you sit listless on the grass in the summer, in the retreats of man, in the cities and towns, with the fertile power of suggestion and association by which you feel that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. When you know him in all the boundless domain of nature, everything speaks to you of your Lord Jesus Christ. Just so, in your father's house, every room speaks to you of your mother who is gone,

— every stair in the staircase, every sound of the bell, every tick of the clock, and everything under the roof, bring back to you her memory. It is not until Jesus Christ fills the soul full, and he is yours, born into you, made familiar, rich, and various, touching something in every part of your nature, and spreading out over all the things around about you, that you have the imagination to conceive of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you have a living conception of him, which you can teach and present to others.

But this imagination is required still more vividly in the second step, namely, the power to throw out your conceptions before others, and such a preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ as shall bring him home to your hearers. How will you undertake to do this? You will have little children to deal with. You will have persons of great practical sense, but of very little imagination, if any. You will have persons of a wayward, coarse temperament, and again others of a fine, sensitive nature. You will have those who take moral impressions with extreme facility, and who understand analogies and illustrations; and you will have others who understand nothing of this kind. These persons you must imbue with a sense of Christ's presence with them. This is the prime question in your ministerial life, — how to bring Jesus Christ home to men, so that he shall be to them what he is to you. You may present Christ to them historically, and far be it from me to say that you must not put great emphasis upon the historical study of Christ; but you must remember that Christ, as he was eighteen hundred years ago, interpreted by the letter, is not a living Christ. It is an

historical picture, but it is not a live Christ. Thence must you get your materials, out of which to make the living faith. Many a minister believes that after he has been delivering a series of sermons on the life and times of Christ, he has been preaching Christ. He has been merely preaching about him, not preaching him. There is many a minister who has been preaching the philosophy of Christ; that is, a view of Christ in which, with infinite refinements and cultured arguments, he makes him one of the persons in the Trinity, — who is jealous for his service, jealous for his honor, exactly discriminating where the line of infinity comes down and touches the line of finity, and pugnacious all along that line, — and then thinks that he has been preaching Christ. Some ministers think that they have been preaching Christ when they have been discoursing about the relations of Christ to the law, the nature of his sufferings, how it was necessary that he should suffer, what the effect of his suffering was upon the universe, and what was the nature of the effect of his suffering upon Divine law, and on the Divine sense of justice. They work out of the life and times of Christ, and out of his sufferings and death, a theory of Atonement, or, as it is called, a "Plan of Salvation," and present that to men, and then they think they have presented Christ.

Now I am not saying that you should not discuss such themes, but only that you should not suppose in so doing you have been preaching Christ. You cannot do it in that way. To preach Christ is to make such a presentation of him as shall fill those who hear you. They must be made to conceive it in themselves,

and he must be to them a live Saviour, as he is to you. One of the noblest expressions of Paul is where he exclaims, "Christ who died, yea, rather, who *liveth*," as if he bounded back from the thought of speaking about Christ as dead. He is one who liveth again and reigneth in the heavens over all the earth.

There is danger of a mistake being made here. You might ask me if you ought not to preach atonement. Yes. Ought you not, also, to preach the nature, sufferings, and death of Christ? Yes, provided you will not suppose you understand more than you really do on these subjects. There is much in that direction that may contribute to instruction; but it seems to me that what you need, what I need, and what the community needs, is that, in a world full of penalty, where aches, pains, tears, sighs, and groans bear witness to Divine justice, — where, from the beginning, groanings and travailings have testified that God is an avenger, — there shall be brought out from this discouraging background the truth of the gospel, that God *loves* mankind, and would not that they die. He is the God that shall wipe away the tears from every eye. He is the God that shall put out with the brightness of his face the light of the sun and of the moon. He shall put his arm around about men, and comfort them as a mother her child. That is the love of God in Christ Jesus. With this we would stimulate men when they are sluggish, would develop their better natures, give them hope in a future life, cheer them onward in the path of duty, and give them confidence in immortality and eternity; for in God we live and move, and have our being.

The imagination, then, is that power of the mind by which it conceives of invisible things, and is able to present them as though they were visible to others. That is one of its most transcendent offices. It is the quality which of necessity must belong to the ministry. The functions of the preacher require it. In godly families it was, formerly, the habit to discourage the imagination, or to use it only occasionally. They misconceived its glorious functions. It is, I repeat, the very marrow of faith, or that power by which we see the invisible and make others see it. It is the power to bring from the depths the things that are hidden from the bodily eye. A ministry enriched by this noble faculty will not and cannot wear out, and the preacher's people will never be tired of listening to him. Did you ever hear anybody say that spring has been worn out? It has been coming for thousands of years, and it is just as sweet, just as welcome, and just as new, as if the birds sang for the first time; and so it will be for a thousand years to come. These great processes of nature that are continually recurring cannot weary us. But discussions of the systems of theology will. Men get accustomed to repetitions of the same thoughts; but there is something in the love of God and Jesus Christ, and in the application of these things to the human soul, that will give an ever-varying freshness to a ministry which occupies itself with the contemplation and teaching of this law of love, and applying the knowledge to all the varying wants and shifting phases of the congregation. Even though you are forty years in one parish, you will never have finished your preaching, and you will not tire your people.

EMOTION.

The next element that I shall mention is the power of *Feeling*. There is a great deal of natural emotion in New-Englanders, but much of it is suppressed. It is not the habit of people in our Eastern States to show feeling nearly as much as in the South, nor as much as in the West. The New Testament, however, is Oriental, and the Orientals always had, and showed, a great deal of emotion. The style of the Apostles' procedure shows that they had a great deal of fervency, which is only another term for emotional outplay.

If a man undertake to minister to the wants of his congregation purely by the power of feeling, without adequate force in the intellect, there are valid objections to that; but every man who means to be in affinity with his congregation must have feeling. It cannot be helped. A minister without feeling is no better than a book. You might just as well put a book, printed in large type, on the desk where all could read it, and have a man turn over the leaves as you read, as to have a man stand up, and clearly and coldly recite the precise truth through which he has gone by a logical course of reasoning. It has to melt somewhere. Somewhere there must be that power by which the man speaking and the men hearing are unified; and that is the power of emotion.

It will vary indefinitely in different persons. Some will have much emotion, and some but very little. It is a thing to be striven for. Where there is relatively a deficiency, men can educate themselves and acquire this power.

Now one of the great hindrances to the exhibition of true Christian feeling in the pulpit is that which I hear called the "dignity of the pulpit." Men have been afraid to lay that aside, and bring themselves under the conditions necessary for the display of emotion. Now and then they will have a sublime, religious tone of feeling at a revival. But, after all, there is a vast amount of feeling playing in every man's mind, which is a very able element in preaching. It may be intense, earnest, pathetic, or cheerful, mirthful, and gratifying, and is the result of love to God and God's creatures. If a man desires to preach with power, he must have this element coming and going between him and his hearers; he must believe what he is saying, and what he says must be out of himself, and not out of his manuscript merely. If a man cannot be free to speak as he feels, but is thinking all the time about the sacredness of the place, it will shut him up. He will grow critical. I think the best rule for a man in society — and it is good for the pulpit too — is to have right aims, do the best things by the best means you can find, and then let yourself alone. Do not be a spy on yourself. A man who goes down the street thinking of himself all the time, with critical analysis, whether he is doing this, that, or the other thing, — turning himself over as if he were a goose on a spit before a fire, and basting himself with good resolutions, — is simply belittling himself. This course is bad also in the closet.

There is a large knowledge of one's self that every man should have. But a constant study of one's own morbid anatomy is very discouraging and harmful. It

is the power of being free and independent in their opinions that men want, and they must get it in some way or other. Having right aims, be manly; know that you mean right, that you will do right by the right way; then let go, and do not be thinking of yourself, if you can help it, from sunrise to sunset. A man must go into the pulpit with this spirit. Let him know what he wants, and let him be able to say, "God knows what sends me here to-day." Let his heart be right with God. When he is working for men and among them, if it is best for him to write, let him write; but it is better, for the most successful work, that he should not stand up and recite merely. You know what you can do only when the sacred fire is upon you. You have no time then for analyzing the effect upon yourself in any minute way.

Many men go into the pulpit fresh from the mirror, cravatted and in perfect toilet, with the sanctity of the place weighing upon them, and everything complete and proper. They know if there is the slightest aberration; and under all this there is a profound self-consciousness. They are shocked if any man, in such a place, does that which creates the slightest discord with their awful solemnity, or breaks the sanctity of the pulpit. Now, according to my own principles, when a man is a messenger of God, and knows that men are in danger, and believes that he is sent to rescue them, he must be lost in the enthusiasm of that work. Do you suppose he can stop his feelings from being manifested by any system of pulpit routine? If he is naturally correct and makes no mistakes, so much the better, for I do not think that mistakes are *desirable;* but there may

be a "propriety" in his preaching that will damn half his congregation, or there may occasionally be almost an "impropriety" that will hurt nobody, and, accompanied with the right manner, will save multitudes of men. If it is for anything, it is to *save men* that you are going into the ministry. If you do not go for that, you would better stay out.

Men often think that excitements are dangerous. Yes; everything is dangerous in this world. From the time that a man is born into the world until he leaves it, it is always possible that there might be danger coupled with everything he does. There is a danger that your feeling may be too boisterous, or of too coarse a nature, or that it will not be adapted to the wants of the congregation; all these things are to be taken into consideration. But there is no danger from excitement that is half so fearful as the danger of not feeling and not caring. The want of feeling is a hundred times more dangerous than any excitement that you can bring to bear upon a community.

ENTHUSIASM.

There is another force which I desire to speak of, and that is the element of *Enthusiasm*. This is not feeling, because pure emotion may or may not be accompanied by enthusiasm. There is in all enthusiasm a certain outburst and glow. You may have enthusiasm and feeling; or, it may be, enthusiasm and imagination; or, it may be, enthusiasm and reason. In almost all communities enthusiasm stands before everything else in moving popular assemblies. A preacher who is enthusiastic in everything he does, in all that he believes,

and in all the movements of his ministry, will generally carry the people with him. He may do this without enthusiasm, but it will be a slow process, and the work will be much more laborious. If you have the power of speech and the skill of presenting the truth, and are enthusiastic, the people will become enthusiastic. People will take your views, because your enthusiasm has inoculated them. Very often you will see a man of great learning go into a community and accomplish nothing at all; and a whipster will go after him with not as much in his whole body as his predecessor had in his little finger, yet he will revolutionize everything.

You may say that a community aroused by enthusiasm alone will just as quickly relapse into their former state. Yes; but I do not counsel enthusiasm alone. The mistake is in permitting any such relapse. It is the same as though you ploughed a field and then left it for the rain to level again. You must not only plough it, but sow seed, harrow, and till it. Yet it is essential that the field should be ploughed. So it is with a community. Mere enthusiasm will do nothing permanent; but its work must be followed up by continual and fervent preaching, and by indoctrination of the truths of the gospel. I repeat, therefore, that enthusiasm is an indispensable element in a minister's work among men, to bring them to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

FAITH.

The other element that I wish to discuss is *Faith*, in the sense of *belief*. I do not mean now by faith what I did in the other instance, namely, the realization of

the invisible, but the believing spirit which you must have, — the conviction of what you teach. A man who does not believe what he is preaching will very seldom make his people believe it; and, therefore, I say if your minds are much in doubt in respect to the grounds or the great truths of Christianity, and if you are thinking about that all the time, you will never be preachers. You must get rid of that feeling. You can get over it by bringing yourselves to deal with the wants of men, and accustoming yourselves to practical life. There is no study like mixing with men, and helping them. There is nothing that will make you believe in God so much as trying to be like God yourselves to your fellow-men, nor anything that will bring Christ so near to you as trying to do what Christ did, by giving up your will for your people, and conforming yourself to their dispositions, and presenting to them everything you have realized in respect to the great doctrines of Christianity. I do not understand how men can preach these doctrines who are occupied all the week in raising questions of doubt. There is abroad a habit of mind which is called "constructive criticism" by philosophers, which is now prevalent in Germany, and somewhat so in England, and is even throwing its shadow upon our own land, and exciting men's minds. A man under that influence is, as it were, congealed, and loses his electrical power, by which only a man preaches with any effect. There was something almost omnipotent and altogether triumphant in the expression, "I know in whom I believe." A man who is the very embodiment of conviction, and who pours it out upon people so that they can see it and

feel it, can preach. He can make men believe things that are true, and even those that are not true, such as that ordinances are indispensable which are not indispensable. He can do almost everything with people, for he really believes his own doctrine. See Roman Catholic priests go into a community, — and there are many of them that might be our exemplars in piety and self-denial, — and with that intense faith and zeal which have made them martyrs among savages, see them labor among the people, and lead them into the fold of the Roman Church. That is largely the result of the Faith-power.

If you are going to preach, do not take things about which you are in doubt to lay before your people. Do not *prove* things too much. A man who goes into his pulpit every Sunday to prove things gives occasion for people to say, "Well, that is not half so certain as I thought it was." You will, by this course, raise up a generation of chronic doubters, and will keep them so by a little drilling in the nice refinement of doctrinal criticism. You can drive back from the heart the great surges of faith with that kind of specious argument, and even the true witness of the Spirit of God in men may be killed in your congregation by such doubting logic. Do not employ arguments any more than is necessary, and then only for the sake of answering objections and killing the enemies of the truth; but in so far as truth itself is concerned, preach it to the *consciousness* of men. If you have not spoiled your people, you have them on your side already. The Word of God and the laws of truth are all conformable to reason and to the course of things that now are; and,

certainly, everything that is required in a Christian life — repentance for sin and turning from it, the taking hold of a higher manhood, the nobility and disinterestedness of man — goes with God's Word and laws naturally. Assume your position, therefore; and if a man says to you, "How is it you are so successful while using so little argument?" tell him that is the very reason of your success. Take things for granted, and men will not think to dispute them, but will admit them, and go on with you and become better men than if they had been treated to a logical process of argument, which aroused in them an argumentative spirit of doubt and opposition.

Remember, then, Imagination, Emotion, Enthusiasm, and Conviction are the four foundation-stones of an effective and successful ministry.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Suppose a man does not have the enthusiasm of which you have spoken, what is he to do?

Mr. Beecher. — Do the best he can, and stop. I think it would be a very wholesome thing in a man's parish life, if once in a while, upon finding that he was not making much of a sermon, he should frankly confess it, and say, "Brethren, we will sing."

Q. Suppose a man tries to work himself up to a feeling of enthusiasm by action and increased emphasis, can he be successful?

Mr. Beecher. — In regard to that, I will mention a circumstance that occurred to my father. I recollect his coming home in Boston one Sunday, when I was

quite a small boy, saying how glad he was to get home, away from the church; and he added, "It seems to me I never made a worse sermon than I did this morning." "Why, father," said I, "I never heard you preach so loud in all my life." "That is the way," said he, "I always holloa when I have n't anything to say!"

But how far a man may assume the language of feeling — and he may sometimes, in order to its production — is a fair question, though one I do not now wish to discuss. There is some difference in the questions put by gray hairs and those put by young men, I notice. [The questioner was an elderly man.] I am sure of one thing, and that is, where a man is naturally cold he is not as well adapted to the office of preaching as an enthusiastic man. I would say to such a man, "Put yourself in that situation in which sympathy naturally flows; then provide a mold for it, and it will fit the mould first or last." It is just like the cultivation of right feeling in any direction. One of my parishioners will say to me, "I have no benevolence, but you preach that I ought to give, — what shall I do?" I say to him, "*Give*, as a matter of duty, until you feel a pleasure in doing it, and the right feeling will come of itself." So, in addressing a congregation, a man may use the language of a feeling for the sake of getting and propagating the feeling. Indeed, when it comes to preaching, I think it would be a great deal better to act as though you had the feeling, even if you had not, for its effect in carrying your audience whither you wish to carry them.

Q. Do you approve of the appointment of professional revivalists?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, if I employ them. If they use me, I do not like it. The term "professional revivalist" is a fortunate one. I have known a great many of these persons, and a great many that did not do much good. Others I have known who have done a great deal of good. I do not see why, if a man has received from God the gifts of arousing people, and bringing them to see and acknowledge the great moral truths of Christianity, he should not be employed as a revivalist, under judicious administration. He should be employed by others, always, so as to work into the hands of the pastors, so as to unite the church, and not to divide it. There are difficulties in the "evangelist system," but there are benefits in it also, and in many cases, and in many parts of the country, it would seem almost indispensable to the growth of the churches. In churches that maintain a regular organization, and are alive and active, I do not see the need of professional revivalists; but where they are run down, and in scattered neighborhoods, I would certainly advise the use of such instrumentalities.

VI.

RHETORICAL DRILL AND GENERAL TRAINING.

February 21, 1872.

THERE is, in certain quarters, a prejudice existing against personal training for preaching, in so far as it is affected by posture, gestures, and the like. There is a feeling abroad in regard to it, as though it would make a dramatic art out of that which should be a sacred inspiration. Men exclaim, "Think of Paul taking lessons in posturing and gesticulation, or of St. John considering beforehand about his robes and the various positions that he should assume!" They say, "Let a man who is called of God go into his closet, if he would prepare; let him be filled with his subject and with the Holy Ghost, and he need not think of anything else."

But suppose a man should stutter, and you should tell him to go into his closet and be filled with the Holy Ghost, would it cure his stuttering? Suppose a clergyman is a great, awkward, sprawling fellow, do you suppose he can pray himself into physical grace? You do not think that the call of the Divine Spirit is a

substitute for study and for intellectual preparation. You know that a man needs academical or professional education in order to preach his best. But the same considerations that make it wise for you to pass through a liberal education, make it also wise for you to pass through a liberal drill and training in all that pertains to oratory.

THE VOICE.

It is, however, a matter of very great importance what end you seek by such training. If a man is attempting to make himself simply a great orator, if his thought of preaching is how to present the most admirable presence before the people, and how to have tones that shall be most ravishing and melting, and if he consider the gesture that is appropriate to this and that sentence, — in short, if he studies as an actor studies, and as an actor properly studies, too, — he will make a great mistake; for what are the actor's ends are but the preacher's means. On the other hand, as a man's voice is that instrument by which the preacher has to perform his whole work, its efficiency is well worthy of study. For instance, the voice must be elastic, so that it can be used for long periods of time without fatigue; and the habitual speaker should learn to derive from it the power of unconscious force. There is just as much reason for a preliminary systematic and scientific drill of the voice as there is for the training of the muscles of the body for any athletic exercise. A man often has, when he begins to preach, a low and feeble voice, each one of his sentences seems like a poor scared mouse running for its hole,

and everybody sympathizes with the man as he is hurrying through his discourse in this way, rattling one word into the other. A little judicious drill would have helped him out of that. If his attention can be called to it before he begins his ministry, is it not worth his while to form a better *habit?* A great many men commence preaching under a nervous excitement. They very speedily rise to a sharp and hard monotone; and then they go on through their whole sermon as fast as they can, never letting their voices go above or below their false pitch, but always sticking to that, until everybody gets tired out, and they among the rest.

VARIOUS VOCAL ELEMENTS.

If a man can be taught in the beginning of his ministry something about suppleness of voice and the method of using it, it is very much to his advantage. For example, I have known scores of preachers who had not the slightest knowledge of the *explosive* tones of the voice. Now and then a man falls into it "by nature," as it is said; that is, he stumbles into it accidentally. But the acquired power of raising the voice at will in its ordinary range, then explosively, and again in its higher keys, and the knowledge of its possibilities under these different phases, will be very helpful. It will help the preacher to spare both himself and his people. It will help him to accomplish results almost unconsciously, when it has become a habit, that could not be gained in any other way.

There are a great many effects in public speaking that you must fall into the conversational tone to make.

Every man ought to know the charm there is in that tone, and especially when using the vernacular or idiomatic English phrases. I have known a great many most admirable preachers who lost almost all real sympathetic hold upon their congregations because they were too literary, too periphrastic, and too scholastic in their diction. They always preferred to use large language, rather than good Saxon English. But let me tell you, there is a subtle charm in the use of plain language that pleases people, they scarcely know why. It gives bell-notes which ring out suggestions to the popular heart. There are words that men have heard when boys at home, around the hearth and the table, words that are full of father and of mother, and full of common and domestic life. Those are the words that afterward, when brought into your discourse, will produce a strong influence on your auditors, giving an element of success; words which will have an effect that your hearers themselves cannot understand. For, after all, simple language is loaded down and stained through with the best testimonies and memories of life. Now, being sure that your theme is one of interest, and worked out with thought, if you take language of that kind, and use it in colloquial or familiar phrases, you must adapt to it a quiet and natural inflection of voice, — for almost all the sympathetic part of the voice is in the lower tones and in a conversational strain, — and you will evoke a power that is triumphant in reaching the heart, and in making your labors successful among the multitudes.

But there is a great deal besides that. Where you are not enforcing anything, but are persuading or en-

couraging men, you will find your work very difficult if you speak in a loud tone of voice. You may fire an audience with a loud voice, but if you wish to draw them into sympathy and to win them by persuasion, and are near enough for them to feel your magnetism and see your eye, so that you need not have to strain your voice, you must talk to them as a father would talk to his child. You will draw them, and will gain their assent to your propositions, when you could do it in no other way, and certainly not by shouting.

On the other hand, where you are in eager exhortation, or speaking on public topics, where your theme calls you to denunciation, to invective, or anything of that kind, the sharp and ringing tones that belong to the upper register are sometimes well-nigh omnipotent. There are cases in which by a single explosive tone a man will drive home a thought as a hammer drives a nail; and there is no escape from it. I recollect, on one occasion, to have heard Dr. Humphrey, President of Amherst College, who certainly was not a rhetorician, speaking in respect to the treatment of the Indians. He used one of the most provincial of provincialisms, yet it came with an explosive tone that fastened it in my memory; and not only that, but it gave an impulse to my whole life, I might say, and affected me in my whole course and labor as a reformer. It was the effect of but a single word. He had been describing the shameful manner in which our government had broken treaties with the Indians in Florida and Georgia, under the influence of Southern statesmanship. He went on saying what was just and what was right, and

came to the discussion of some critical point of policy which had been proposed, when he suddenly ceased his argument, and exclaimed, "The voice of the people will be lifted up, and they shall say to the government, YOU SHA'N'T!" Now "sha'n't" is not very good English, but it is provincial, colloquial, and very familiar to every boy. It carried a home feeling with it, and we all knew what it meant. He let it out like a bullet, and the whole chapel was hushed for the moment, and then the rustle followed which showed that the shot had struck. It has remained in my memory ever since.

NECESSITY OF DRILL.

All these various modes of drilling the voice are very important. They give the power to use it on a long strain without tiring it; to use it from top to bottom, so as to have all the various effects, and to know what they are; and to make it flexible, so that you have a ready instrument at your will. These are very important elements to a man who is going to be a preacher. You say, "Yes, I suppose a man ought to take some lessons in regard to these things, but he need not make it a study." I beg your pardon, gentlemen, don't touch it unless you are going to make thorough work of it. No knowledge is really *knowledge* until you can use it without knowing it. You do not understand the truth of anything until it has so far sunk into you that you have almost forgotten where you got it. No man knows how to play a piano who stops and says, "Let me see, that is B, and that is D," and so on. When a man has learned and mas-

tered his instrument thoroughly, he does not stop to think which keys he must strike, but his fingers glide from one to the other mechanically, automatically, almost involuntarily. This subtle power comes out only when he has subdued his instrument and forgotten himself, conscious of nothing but the ideas and harmonies which he wishes to express.

If you desire to have your voice at its best, and to make the best use of it, you must go into a drill which will become so familiar that it ceases to be a matter of thought, and the voice takes care of itself. This ought to be done under the best instructors, if you have the opportunity; if not, then study the best books and faithfully *practice* their directions. It was my good fortune, in early academical life, to fall into the hands of your estimable fellow-citizen, Professor Lovell, now of New Haven, and for a period of three years I was drilled incessantly (you might not suspect it, but I was) in posturing, gesture, and voice-culture. His manner, however, he very properly did not communicate to me. And manner is a thing which, let me here remark, should never be communicated or imitated. It was the skill of that gentleman that he never left a manner with anybody. He simply gave his pupils the knowledge of what they had in themselves. Afterward, when going to the seminary, I carried the method of his instructions with me, as did others. We practiced a great deal on what was called "Dr. Barber's System," which was then in vogue, and particularly in developing the voice in its lower register, and also upon the explosive tones. There was a large grove lying be-

tween the seminary and my father's house, and it was the habit of my brother Charles and myself, and one or two others, to make the night, and even the day, hideous with our voices, as we passed backward and forward through the wood, exploding all the vowels, from the bottom to the very top of our voices. I found it to be a very manifest benefit, and one that has remained with me all my life long. The drill that I underwent produced, not a rhetorical manner, but a flexible instrument, that accommodated itself readily to every kind of thought and every shape of feeling, and obeyed the inward will in the outward realization of the results of rules and regulations.

HEALTH OF THE VOICE.

In respect to the preservation of the voice there is but little to be said, except this, that a good, healthy man, who maintains wholesome habits, keeps his neck tough, treats his head and chest daily with cold affusions, and does not exhaust himself unnecessarily in overstrained speech, should not find it difficult to maintain his voice in a healthy condition, and that through life. I will not go into that obscure subject of ministers' bronchitis. I never had it, and therefore know nothing of it, for which I thank God. If you have it, or are threatened with it, it is rather for your physician than for an unskilled person to give you directions about it. But, generally, a healthy body and a careful prudence in the exercise of the voice will, I think, go far to make you sound speakers during the whole of your lives.

BODILY CARRIAGE — POSTURE.

It is not necessary that a man should stand awkwardly because it is natural. It is not necessary that a man, because he may not be able to stand like the statue of Apollo, should stand ungracefully. He loses, unconsciously, a certain power; for, although he does not need a very fine physical figure (which is rather a hindrance, I think), yet he should be pleasing in his bearing and gestures. A man who is very beautiful and superlatively graceful sets people to admiring him; they make a kind of monkey god of him, and it stands in the way of his usefulness. From this temptation most of us have been mercifully delivered. On the other hand, what we call naturalness, fitness, good taste, and propriety are to be sought. You like to see a man come into your parlor with, at least, ordinary good manners and some sense of propriety, and what you require in your parlor you certainly have a right to expect in church. One of the reasons why I condemn these churns called pulpits is that they teach a man bad habits; he is heedless of his posture, and learns bad tricks behind these bulwarks. He thinks that people will not see them.

GESTURE.

So with gestures. There are certain people who will never make many gestures, but they should see to it that what they do make shall be graceful and appropriate. There are others who are impulsive, and so full of feeling that they throw it out in every direction, and it is, therefore, all the more important that their action

shall be shorn of awkwardness and constrained mannerism. Now and then a man is absolutely dramatic, as, for instance, John B. Gough, who could not speak otherwise. It is unconscious with him. It is inherent in all natural orators; they put themselves at once, unconsciously, in sympathy with the things they are describing. In any of these situations, whether you are inclined to but little action or a great deal, or even to dramatic forms of action, it is very desirable that you should drill yourselves and practice incessantly, so that your gestures shall not offend good taste. This, too, is a very different thing from practicing before a mirror, and it is a very different thing from making actors of yourselves. It is an education that ought to take place early, and which ought to be incorporated into your very being.

SEMINARY TRAINING.

I will pass on now to some suggestions in respect to your seminary course. I know very well how impatient and eager many students are to get rid of the two or three years' training which is required in the seminary. A man who is naturally a scholar loves to procure knowledge, because it is a luxury for him to study. He will probably be an over-studious man, and will need to be checked rather than stimulated to greater activity. But those who are impatient of study, and are longing to go into the field, and who want to pray and converse with impenitent sinners and bring them into the Kingdom, will often say, "What do you suppose Latin and Greek have got to do with that; can't we begin the work without any such labori-

ous preparation as this?" I know what the feeling is; I have seen it displayed very often.

If you will read the familiar correspondence of General Sherman during the war, which was published by the War Department, you will see that, months and months before his great march, he was studying the country through which he was about to go, its resources, its power of sustaining armies, its populousness, the habits of the people, in short, everything that belonged to it, in every relation, and all the questions that could possibly arise in regard to it. He had discussed them on both sides and on two or three hypotheses, so that when he started upon his famous march he had really gone over the country in advance, and made himself the military master of its features and character. He was possessed of all the knowledge necessary to enable him to grapple with any event that might take place. He was prepared for any of two or three different lines of action. Now, you have a campaign that is a great deal longer than his, and an enemy that is a great deal harder to fight; and you must make diligent preparation. You must lay up all the knowledge you can, now, and form habits of earnest study that shall make your whole after-life's work comparatively easy. You will have enough direct action when you get into the field; and it behooves you now to do whatever you can to abbreviate your future labors.

STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

In the first place, the whole science of interpretation, the whole study of the Word of God and all the

developments that are either based upon it or nearly touch it, will be a world of advantage to you. I had the good fortune to be under Professor Stowe in my theological training. Those who have gone through a course with him need not be told how much knowledge he has, nor his keen and crystalline way of putting that knowledge. The advantages which I derived from his teaching, his way of taking hold of Scripture, the knowledge I got of the book as a whole, are inestimable to me. These I got while pursuing my studies in the seminary. In looking over my old note-books, which I filled independently of my course there, but which were partly in consequence of it and partly from teaching in the Bible class, I found I had gone then very nearly through the New Testament with close and careful study, and had formed an intimate acquaintance with it, before I began to preach regularly. In the early years of my ministry I engaged in a great amount of exegetical study and interpretation of the Word of God, having one service every week which was mainly devoted to that work. Now, the preliminary acquisition of the power to do that will abbreviate your after-work more than you can tell. Do not believe that your enthusiasm will be a light always burning. You must have oil in your lamps. Study and patient labor are indispensable even to genius. God may have given you genius, but unless he has also given you industry, the genius will leak away, unused, wasted, without profit. Inspiration, intuition, and all the efflorescence of genius, are Divine gifts; yet there must be some material for them to work upon. You cannot have a flame unless there is something that will

feed combustion; you cannot study too much while in the seminary, preparing for the field of your future labors. It will neither cumber you nor hinder you. It will facilitate your work at every step.

THEOLOGY.

In respect to systematic theology the same is true. It is very desirable, I think, that every preacher should have not merely gone through *a* system, but that he should have studied *comparative* theology. He ought to study that system on which he expects to base his ministry; and it is also desirable that he should take cross-views of differing systems of theology, — for a variety of reasons. You may think you are going to preach some particular system, — but most of you will not, even if you try. You may take your teachers' views of theology and preach them for a while, but they will not suit you long. Every man who is fit to preach will, before many years, begin to have an outline of his own theology very distinctively marked out. But it is always necessary to know what other men have thought, to practice close thinking, to be drilled in sharp and nice discrimination, and to have a mind that is not slatternly and loose, but which knows how to work philosophically. You are to meet men who know how to think, if you do not. You may be called to take a parish in which the lawyer, the doctor, and two or three retired gentlemen will know a great deal more than you do, and will turn up their noses whenever you undertake to preach a sermon. You cannot afford to have a man in your parish accuse you of being a boy in the pulpit. Every man who preaches from year

to year has a system. He may not have the current one. It may not be Calvin after the manner of Edwards, nor Calvin according to Dwight, nor Calvin as it is taught at Princeton, nor yet Arminianism. It may be this, that, or the other, of the various shades, — or a new shade of his own. So that you must form the mental habit of looking at all presentations of truth. You will observe that it is not necessary for a minister to give lectures in theology to his people, however much he may know, — though there might be worse things than that. You might have an occasional familiar lecture on special points of theology, and indoctrinate your people with them. But your sermons must be philosophical in principle and thoroughly thought out. You must acquire the habit of thinking, of looking at truth, not in isolated and fragmentary forms, but in all its relations; and of using it constantly as an instrument of producing good. You see I do believe in the science of theology, though I may not give my faith to any particular school of it, in all points. But no school can dispense with a habit of thinking according to the laws of cause and effect, for that is absolutely necessary.

A SMALL PARISH AT FIRST.

In your first settlement, young gentlemen, remember the parable. When you are invited to a feast, take not the highest seat, but take rather the lowest place, so that it shall be said to you, "Friend, go up higher."

When a young man is just going out, and is beginning to preach, and men find great hopes in him, one of the worst things that can befall him is to think

himself an uncommon man, a man of prospects; and to have it whispered here and there, "O, he will shake the world yet!" These things are very mischievous to a young man, especially if they lead him to start at a faster pace than he can well maintain. One of the most common mistakes a young man makes is in thinking that he must have a place large enough for his talents; he does not know where to bestow his goods! If there is an opportunity to take a small country place he will take it "just temporarily," but he has his eye on four or five calls, which he thinks are very likely to come to him. This conceit is very deleterious. When you enter upon the work of the ministry it is very desirable that you should take a small and humble sphere, even if you afterward are called to a large one. You should begin at the bottom.

In the first place, you cannot develop so well in any other way the needful creative and administrative faculties. If I were Pope in America, besides a hundred other things that would be done, I would send every young man that was anxious to preach into the extreme West, and I would make him think that he was never coming back again. He should work there for ten years; then I think he might begin to be ready for a larger place, or an older church. I would not let him know my future plans for him, but he should think he was going to remain there, and do his work.

One especial advantage of a small parish is that you are obliged to do your work by knowing every person in the community, studying every one of them, and knowing how to impress and manage them by your personal influence and the power of the gospel.

Every young minister, too, ought to have a parish where he shall have some time to study, where he shall not be hurried and worried with extra meetings, with excitements and with various distractions. When you first begin to preach, you have a raw, untrained nervous system, which cannot bear so much as it can afterward. A man's brain gets tough by exercise. I can now go through an amount of brain-work that would have killed me outright in the first years of my ministerial life. I can trace the gradually accumulating power of endurance of brain excitement.

AN EARLY EXPERIENCE IN THE WEST.

It was my lot at first to be placed in a village with a mere handful of inhabitants in one of the Western States. I conceive it to be one of the kindnesses of Providence that I was sent to so small a place. I had but one male member in the church, and I wished him out all the time I was there. (Let me illustrate by personal allusions, if you please; for I do not know why you ask ministers from active parishes to advise you, unless they should tell you something of their experience.)

I practiced public speaking from the time of my sophomore year in college. I was addicted to going out and making temperance speeches, and holding conference meetings, so that I acquired considerable confidence, being naturally very diffident. When I went to the seminary I still kept up that habit, practicing whenever I had the opportunity. At the end of my three years' seminary course — six months of which, however, were diverted to editorial work, a loss of time

to my studies which was afterwards made up — I went to a small town in Indiana, the last one in the State towards Cincinnati, on the Ohio River. It had perhaps five or six hundred inhabitants. It had in it a Methodist, a Baptist, and this Presbyterian Church to which I went. The church would hold, perhaps, from two hundred and fifty to three hundred people. It had no lamps and no hymn-books. It had nineteen female members; and the whole congregation could hardly raise from $200 to $250 as salary. I took that field and went to work in it.

Among the earliest things I did was to beg money from Cincinnati to buy side-lamps to hang up in the church, so that we could have night service. After being there a month or two I went to Cincinnati again, and collected money enough to buy hymn-books. I distributed them in the seats. Before this the hymns had been lined out. I recollect one of the first strokes of management I ever attempted in that parish was in regard to these hymn-books. Instead of asking the people if they were willing to have them, I just put the books into the pews; for there are ten men that will fight a change about which they are consulted, to one that will fight it when it has taken place. I simply made the change for them. There was a little looking up and looking around, but nothing was said. So after that we sang out of books. Then there was nobody in the church to light the lamps, and they could not afford to get a sexton. Such a thing was unknown in the primitive simplicity of that Hoosier time. Well, I unanimously elected myself to be the sexton. I swept out the church, trimmed the lamps and lighted them.

I was, literally, the light of that church. I did n't stop to groan about it, or moan about it, but I did it. At first, the men-folk thereabout seemed to think it was chaff to catch them with, or something of that kind; but I went steadily on doing the work. After a month or so two young men, who were clerks in a store there, suggested to me that they would help me. I "did n't think I wanted any help; it was only what one man could do." Then they suggested three or four of us taking one month each, and in that way they were worked in.

It was the best thing that ever happened to them. Having something to do in the church was a means of grace to them. It drew them to me and me to them. None of them were Christian young men; but I consulted them about various things, and by and by I brought a case to them. I said, "Here is a young man who is in great danger of going the wrong way and losing his soul. What do you think is the best means of getting at him?" It made them rather sober and thoughtful to be talking about the salvation of that young man's soul, and the upshot was that they saved their own. They very soon afterward came into the Spirit, and were converted, and became good Christian men.

Now, while I was there, I preached the best sermons I knew how to get up. I remember distinctly that every Sunday night I had a headache. I went to bed every Sunday night with a vow registered that I would buy a farm and quit the ministry. If I have said it once, I have said it five hundred times, that I spoilt a good farmer to make a poor minister.

I said a great many extravagant things in my pulpit, and preached with a great deal of crudeness. I preached a great many sermons, which, after six months, I would not have preached again. I frequently did as many young men do, shaped into a general truth that which was truth only under certain circumstances, and with a particular class of people.

I was a great reader of the old sermonizers. I read old Robert South through and through; I saturated myself with South; I formed much of my style and my handling of texts on his methods. I obtained a vast amount of instruction and assistance from others of those old sermonizers, who were as familiar to me as my own name. I read Barrow, Howe, Sherlock, Butler, and Edwards particularly. I preached a great many sermons while reading these old men, and upon their discourses I often founded the framework of my own. After I had preached them, I said to myself, "That will never do; I would n't preach that again for all the world." But I was learning, and nobody ever tripped me up. I had no Board of Elders ready to bring me back to orthodoxy. I had time to sow all my ministerial wild oats, and without damage to my people, for they knew too little to know whether I was orthodox or not. And it was, generally, greatly to their advantage, because people are very much like fishes. Whales take vast quantities of water into their mouths for the sake of the animalculæ it contains, and then blow out the water, while keeping in the food. People do pretty much the same. They don't believe half that you say. The part that is nutritious they keep, and the rest they let alone. This early ministerial training does not hurt

them, but it is invaluable to a young man who is getting the bearings of his new station, and learning how to handle the ship that God has given him to sail.

GENERAL HINTS.

After faithful and constant practice in such a place as this, you will after a very little time begin to make fewer and fewer mistakes, and you will be able to bear more and more work. You will be able to do more creative work after this preparation, and to make the most of your resources. You will also learn how to handle men and things, and you will be determined upon success in your work; in other words, it will make a man of you.

Let me tell you one secret: that a strong country church is a position of very much more influence than nineteen out of twenty city churches. City churches are more nearly like wells than anything else. They have their own little circle, and outside of that nothing. Country churches are like rivers. They are collected from far-distant regions, and run a great way. Then again, in a city, three or four churches only are conspicuous and popular, and the rest are comparatively unknown. Keep out of the city as long as you can. Do not aspire to so-called great churches and great places. Go into rural neighborhoods. Begin your ministry with the common people. Get seasoned with the humanity and sympathies which belong to men; mix with farmers, mechanics, and laboring men; eat with them, sleep with them; for, after all, there is the great substance of humanity. You will get it in its purest and simplest forms there. You will have time

to grow and strengthen yourselves. Your bodies will grow wholesome. Your brains will grow strong. Your nervous systems will get tough, so that if ever God opens the door and calls you to a more difficult sphere, you can fill it, and do twice as much work with more certainty and with more success than if called to the larger place in the beginning of your ministry.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. How about living in those little places that don't pay enough to live upon?

Mr. Beecher. — Live within your income.

There was a Mr. Bushnell, quite as famous in his way, in Ohio, as Horace Bushnell was in Connecticut, although of different make. He was a man like Paul, insignificant in presence, small, and weak-eyed, and I believe, now, is blind entirely. He was a man who, besides having a heart consecrated to God and humanity, was also fearless, brave, and enterprising. There was a little settlement below Cincinnati, called Cleves. The people there had driven out every minister they had had. The Methodists tried it, and if they cannot stick, you may say it is a tough place. They had to abandon that neighborhood. Bushnell determined that the gospel should be preached there, and thither he went; and it was at a time, too, when it was enough to burn a man to have it known that he was an abolitionist. Bushnell went there and preached, and took no pains to hide the fact in the neighborhood that he was an abolitionist, although he was so near Kentucky, which was just over the river. He could not get a man in that region

who would take him to board. Finally, he found an old cabin that was abandoned by some negroes. He daubed it over with mud, and fixed it up so that it would shelter him. He went into the place, lived in it, cooked for himself, took care of himself, and preached to this people.

At first they would n't go to hear him. He started out after them. He went into the fields and talked with them. He said, "Now I will tell you, you may just as well come to church; if you won't come where I preach, I shall go to you."

They began to admire the man's pluck. "He is a little fellow," they said, "but he is so courageous!" They had threatened him with everything; but they finally began to listen to him. The first man that came was an infidel. He had been made an infidel by the teachings of Christian churches and ministers that the Bible justified slavery. He was a man of great benevolence and great justice, and he said, "If Christianity teaches that, I will never be a Christian." When he heard of a minister who denounced slavery, and proved from the Bible that it was unjust, he said, "I want to hear that man." When he found what manner of man he was, he joined himself to the new-comer. He was converted, and became an active Christian man. The result was, that Bushnell very soon gathered up a little church, and they had prayer-meetings and other Christian gatherings in the neighborhood, which effectively began the work of regenerating it.

Now I want to know what success Bushnell would have met with if he had put on a broadcloth coat, and had questioned and paltered with the people, saying,

"How much salary will you give me?" or if he had asked himself, "Is it my duty to settle down there?" I believe that the Word of Christ is the best charter of every Christian minister. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." There is nothing that makes salary so fast as not to care for it, and to put your whole life and soul into the work of God's ministry, so that men feel to the bottom of their hearts that there is a man who has got *hold* of them. No man will starve. I do not mean by that that there is to be no consideration for the future, but I mean to say that a generous trust in the people and an earnest devotion to work will insure a man all the support that he needs.

Q. Would you advise a young man to settle immediately upon leaving the seminary, especially in going West?

Yes; the quicker you get to work after you are through your studies the better. People sometimes say, "Do you think it would be better for me to go to Edinburgh and take a course there?" or, "How would it be if I should go to Germany?" Well, if you are going to be a critical student, a professor, or if you are going to compile a dictionary or take a chair in a theological seminary; if your life is going to be a scholar's life, in contradistinction from a preacher's life, — I should say that a post-seminary course is advisable. But, if you are going to be working among men, do not delay your work one unnecessary moment after getting through your seminary course. An academical education is somewhat exclusive in its character, and tends to foster a class-spirit. You are separated from the

people, and are kept out of the ordinary run of human life; you are, as it were, made monks of. If you are fit for your work, the sooner you get into real business in the field, the better for you.

Q. Would you have a man preach while he is in the seminary?

I should say, Yes. The habit of bringing your minds to bear on other people, in a moral point of view, ought to be kept up all the way through, from beginning to end. A habit of thinking of other people's welfare, laboring for it, and accumulating the material by which you will accomplish it, carrying your heart warm all the time, is a good thing for a man who is going to preach and to be a minister of Christ.

Q. Are not these little mean places very unfavorable for the culture of grace, etc.?

MR. BEECHER. — They are not mean.

Q. I think your first settlement, Lawrenceburg, was mean.

MR. BEECHER. — No; it was not. It was a good place to train a young minister. We are all sinful. My church was sinful, and its pastor was. There were various degrees of sinners all the way through. But that little town had one woman in it that redeemed the place, and if I had the making of a Catholic calendar I would enroll her as a saint. Old Mother Rice taught me more practical godliness than any one else, except my own father. She was a laboring-woman, the wife of an old, drunken, retired sea-captain. They were so poor that they had to live above a cooper's shop, with loose planks for a floor, which wabbled as you walked over them, and through which you could see the men at work below. Her husband would abuse her and

swear at her. But there was never any person in distress in the town that Mother Rice did not visit. No case of sickness occurred that she did not consecrate the chamber with her presence. There was nobody who was discouraged and needed comfort that did not experience her kind offices. She was one of the sweetest, gentlest, and serenest of women. This place was like the mud and rubbish brought up by the diver, which yet contains a beautiful pearl. This woman would have redeemed that town from being mean, even if it had had no other good thing in it. You can always find goodness and nobility by looking for it.

A Student. — I know something about the Bushnell of whom you have spoken, and, although he is a man whom everybody regards with respect, yet he is not a man who comes up to your idea of what a minister should be.

Mr. Beecher. — I only mentioned his name to illustrate how a man will succeed by going into the lowest and most hardened community with a consecrated spirit, with courage, and with a determination to succeed. I do not hold him up as a model minister throughout his whole ministerial life, by any means.

The same Student. — I simply brought up his name in this connection to show the difficulty there is connected with going West, into these little places, in regard to culture. You hold that we ought to have a certain grace and ease of bearing. It seems to me that that kind of a place is very undesirable for such training.

Mr. Beecher. — Then carry it there. That should be part of a minister's influence out there. The theory that lies behind every other is that a minister is a little Christ, that he teaches men about Christ by acting the life of Christ over again right before them, with the

same humiliation, self-denial, and self-sacrifice that Jesus Christ displayed when on earth among men. Now this, as a model, is so high that we shall all fall short of it; but it is an ideal that will do you a great deal of good to keep in your mind, if you are going to set yourself up before your fellow-men as teachers and preachers of the life that is reserved for God's people. You must be to them what Christ was, in his time, to those around him.

Did you ever read Parkman's History of the Jesuits, in relation to their missions in Canada among the Northern Indians? That book ought to be read by every Protestant clergyman, and especially by those who think there is no piety in the Catholic Church. No matter how erroneous their teaching may be, they displayed some of the sweetest and noblest traits of self-devotion ever recorded in the pages of history, in their missionary work among the Indians. They went among them in their rudest estate, lived in their smoky huts, were derided, hooted at, and contemned, year after year. They were men of culture and refinement, and men who had earned at home a world-wide reputation; yet they lived in these wigwams without a single convert, and were willing to live forty years there, faithful in labor, and then die without a sign of success. They rebuke us in our missionary work.

Q. May it not be desirable to spend a year in an Eastern parish before going West?

Mr. Beecher. — No, sir! You will never go West if you do. If you go West and endure hardships like a good soldier, you will gradually become worthy to occupy an easier post when you shall be called to one.

VII.

RHETORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

I BELIEVE it was Locke who inveighed against Illustrations as the enemies of truth, as leading men astray by latent or supposed analogies; and yet I apprehend that the strictest and most formal processes of logical reasoning have led just as many men astray as ever illustrations did. You can perplex people, and you can, with great facility, make ingenious issues with illustrations; but so you can with everything else. They are liable to misuse, but no more than any other instrument of persuasion. If a man knows truth and loves it, if he is earnest in the inculcation of it, and if he never allows himself to state for truth that which he does not thoroughly believe to be true, the processes which he employs, whether analogies, causal reasoning, or illustrations the most poetical, will participate in the honesty of the man; and there is little risk that any one part will be mistaken more than any other.

THE NATURE OF ILLUSTRATION.

We have the best example of the use of illustration in the history of the education of the world from time immemorial. Experience has taught that not only are

persons pleased by being instructed through illustration, but that they are more readily instructed thus, because, substantially, the mode in which we learn a new thing is by its being likened to something which we already know. This is the principle underlying all true illustrations. They are a kind of covert analogy, or likening of one thing to another, so that obscure things become plain, being represented pictorially or otherwise by things that are not obscure and that we are familiar with. So, then, the groundwork of all illustration is the familiarity of your audience with the thing on which the illustration stands. Now and then it will be proper to lay down and explain with particularity the fact out of which an illustration is to grow, and then to make the fact illustrate the truth to be made clear. The speaker will, for instance, undertake to explain the isochronism of a watch, and having done this so that the audience will understand it, he may employ the watch in that regard as an illustration. But, generally, the subject-matter of an illustration should be that which is familiar to the minds of those to whom you are speaking.

It is not my province to go into the theoretical nature of the different kinds of illustration, of metaphors, similes, and what not; that you have learned in another department, both in your academical and collegiate courses. But I hope to give you some practical hints as to the manner of using these things.

REASONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS IN PREACHING.

The purpose that we have in view in employing an illustration is to help people to understand more easily

the things that we are teaching them. You ought to drive an audience as a good horseman drives a horse on a journey, not with a supreme regard for himself, but in a way that will enable the horse to achieve his work in the easiest way. An audience has a long and sometimes an arduous journey when you are preaching. Occasionally the way is pretty steep and rough; and it is the minister's business, not so much to take care of himself, as, by all the means in his power, to ease the way for his audience and facilitate their understanding. An illustration is one of the means by which the truth that you teach to men is made so facile that they receive it without effort. I know that some men — among whom, I think, was Coleridge — justify the obscurities of their style, saying that it is a good practice for men to be obliged to dig for the ideas which they get. But I submit to you that working on Sunday is not proper for ordinary people in church, and obliging your parishioners to dig and delve for ideas in your sermons is making them do the very work you are paid a salary to do for them. Your office is to do the chief part of the thinking and to arrange the truth, while their part is to experience the motive-power, and take the incitement toward a better life. In this work, whatever can make your speech touch various parts of the mind in turn will be of great advantage to your audience, and will enable them to perform their rugged journey with less fatigue and with more pleasure. An illustration is never to be a mere ornament, although its being ornamental is no objection to it. If a man's sermon is like a boiled ham, and the illustrations are like cloves stuck in it afterward to make it look a little better, or like a

bit of celery or other garnish laid around on the edge for the mere delectation of the eye, it is contemptible. But if you have a real and good use for an illustration, that has a real and direct relation to the end you are seeking, then it may be ornamental, and no fault should be found with it for that.

THEY ASSIST ARGUMENT.

Look a little at the result to be accomplished by facile and skillful illustrations. In the first place, they are helpful in all that part of preaching which is naturally based upon pure reasoning, and which is somewhat obscure to minds not trained in philosophical thought. There ought to be in every sermon something that shall task your audience somewhat as it tasked you; otherwise you will not compass some of the noblest themes that lie in the sphere of your duty. But pure ratiocination addresses itself to but a very small class of the community. There are very few men who can follow a close argument from beginning to end; and those who can are trained to it, it being an artificial habit, though, of course, some minds are more apt for it than others. But the theme must be very familiar, and the argument must be largely a statement of facts, for most audiences to understand it. If you go one step beyond this, into philosophy or metaphysics, so called, as you must do sometimes, you will be in danger of leaving half your audience behind you.

Illustrations, while they make it easier for all, are absolutely the only means by which a large part of your audience will be able to understand at all the

abstruse processes of reasoning. For a good, compact argument, without illustrations, is very much like the old-fashioned towers that used to be built before artillery was invented; they were built strong, of stone, all the way up above a ladder's reach without a door or a window-slit. The first apartment was so high that it was safe from scaling, and then came a few windows, and very narrow ones at that. Such were good places for beleaguered men, but they were very poor places to bring up a family in, where there were no windows to let in the light.

Now an illustration is a window in an argument, and lets in light. You may reason without an illustration; but where you are employing a process of pure reasoning and have arrived at a conclusion, if you can then by an illustration flash back light upon what you have said, you will bring into the minds of your audience a realization of your argument that they cannot get in any other way. I have seen an audience, time and again, follow an argument, doubtfully, laboriously, almost suspiciously, and look at one another, as much as to say, "Is he going right?"—until the place is arrived at, where the speaker says, "It is like—" and then they listen eagerly for what it is like; and when some apt illustration is thrown out before them, there is a sense of relief, as though they said, "Yes, he is right." If you have cheated them, so much the worse for you; but if your illustrations are as true as your argument, and your argument true as the truth itself, then you have helped them a great deal. So that, as a mere matter of help to reason, illustrations are of vast utility in speaking to an audience.

THEY HELP HEARERS TO REMEMBER.

Then they are a very great help in carrying away and remembering the things your audience have heard from you; because it is true from childhood up (and woe be to that man out of whom the child has died entirely!) that we remember pictures and parables and fables and stories. Now, if in your discourses, when taking a comprehensive view of truth, you illustrate each step by an appropriate picture, you will find that the plain people of your congregation will go away, remembering every one of your illustrations. If they are asked, "Well, what was the illustration for?" they will stop and consider: "What was he saying then?" They will fish for it, and will generally get the substance of it. "O, it was this; he was proving so and so, and then he illustrated it by this." They will remember the picture; and, if they are questioned, the picture will bring back the truth to them; and after that they will remember both together. Whereas all except the few logically trained minds would very soon have forgotten what you had discoursed upon, if you had not thus suitably seasoned it.

Your illustrations will be the salt that will preserve your teachings, and men will remember them.

THEY STIMULATE IMAGINATION.

The effect of illustrations upon ideality is very great. They bring into play the imaginative faculty, which is only another name for ideality. The sense of the invisible and of the beautiful are combined in ideality. Now all great truth is beautiful. It carries in it ele-

ments of taste and fitness. The "beauty of holiness" we find spoken of in the Word of God, and this is a beauty that does not belong to anything material. God is transcendently a lover of beauty, and all the issues of the Divine Soul are, if we could see them as he sees them, beautiful, just as self-denial and love are beautiful, and as purity and truth and all good things are beautiful.

It is not, therefore, in the interest of truth that a man should sift it down to the merest bare nuggets of statement that it is susceptible of; and this is not best for an audience. It is best that a truth should have argument to substantiate it, and analysis and close reasoning; yet when you come to give it to an audience you should clothe it with flesh, so that it shall be fit for their understandings. In no other way can you so stir up that side of the mind to grasp your statements and arguments easily, and prepare it to remember them. You cannot help your audience in any other way so well as by keeping alive in them the sense of the imagination, and making the truth palpable to them, because it is appealing to the taste, to the sense of the beautiful in imagery as well as to the sense of truth.

THE ART OF RESTING AUDIENCES.

It is a great art to know how to preach as long as you want to, or have to, and yet not tire your audience, especially where you have been preaching many years in the same place. For my own part I do not think that a very long sermon is adapted to edification; but a man ought to be able to preach an hour, and to hold

his audience too. He cannot do it, however, if his sermon is a monotone, either in voice or thought. He cannot do it unless he is interesting. He cannot possibly hold his people unwearied, when they have become accustomed to his voice, his manner, and his thoughts, unless he moves through a very considerable scale, up and down, resting them; in other words, changing the faculties that he is addressing. For instance, you are at one time, by statements of fact, engaging the perceptive reason, as a phrenologist would say. You soon pass, by a natural transition, to the relations that exist between facts and statements, and you are then addressing another audience, namely, the reflective faculties of your people. And when you have concluded an argument upon that, and have flashed an illustration that touches and wakes up their fancy and imagination, you are bringing in still another audience, — the ideal or imaginative one. And now, if out of these you express a sweet wine that goes to the emotions and arouses their feelings, so that one and another in the congregation wipes his eyes, and the proud man, that does not want to cry, blows his nose, — what have you done? You have relieved the weariness of your congregation by enabling them to listen with different parts of their minds to what you have been saying.

If I were to stand here on one leg for ten minutes, I should be very grateful if I were permitted to stand on the other a little while. If I stood on both of them, perfectly erect, I should be glad to have the opportunity of resting more heavily on one, and taking an easy position. In other words, there is nothing that tires a

man so much as standing in one posture, stock still. By preaching to different parts of the minds of your audience, one part rests the others; and persons not wearied out will listen to long sermons and think them very short. It is a good thing for a man to preach an hour, and have his people say, "Why, you ought not to have stopped for an hour yet." That is a compliment that you will not get every day, and you ought to be very grateful when you do get it.

ILLUSTRATIONS PROVIDE FOR VARIOUS HEARERS.

The relation of illustrations to a mixed audience is another point which deserves careful consideration. I have known ministers who always unconsciously sifted their audience, and preached to nothing but the bolted wheat. Now, you have got a little fine flour in your congregation, and more poor flour; then you have the Graham flour, which is the wheat ground up husk and all; and then you have all the unground wheat, and all the straw, and all the stubble. You are just as much bound to take care of the bottom as you are of the top. True, it is easier, after you have fallen into the habit of doing it, to preach to those people who appreciate your better efforts. It is easier for you to preach so that the household of cultured and refined people will love to sit down and talk with you on this subtle feeling, and about that wonderful idea you got from the German poet, and so on. But that is self-indulgence, half the time, on the part of a pastor. He follows the path that he likes, the one in which he excels, and he is not thinking of providing for the great masses that are under his care.

You are bound to see that *everybody gets something every time.* There ought not to be a five-year-old child that shall go home without something that pleases and instructs him.

How are you going to do that? I know of no other way than by illustration.

I have around my pulpit, and sometimes crowding upon the platform, a good many of the boys and girls of the congregation. I notice that, during the general statements of the sermon and the exegetical parts of it, introducing the main discourse, the children are playing with each other. One will push a hymn-book or a hat toward the other, and they will set each other laughing. That which ought not to be done is, with children, very funny and amusing. By and by I have occasion to use an illustration, and I happen to turn round and look at the children, and not one of them is playing, but they are all looking up with interest depicted on their faces. I did not think of them in making it, perhaps, but I saw, when the food fell out in that way, that even the children were fed too. You will observe that the children in the congregation will usually know perfectly well whether there is anything in the sermon for them or not. There always ought to be, and there is no way in which you can prepare a sermon for the delectation of the plain people, and the uncultured, and little children, better than by making it attractive and instructive with illustrations. It is always the best method to adopt with a mixed audience.

And that is the kind of audience for which you must prepare yourselves, too. It is only now and then that a man preaches in a college chapel, where all are students.

You are going into parishes where there are old and young and middle-aged people, where there are working men and men of leisure, dull men and sharp men, practiced worldlings, and spiritual and guileless men; in fact, all sorts of people. And you are to preach so that every man shall have his portion in due season, and that portion ought to be in every sermon, more or less. You will scarcely be able to do it in any other way than by illustration. If God has not given you the gift by original endowment, strive to attain it by cultivation.

MODES OF PRESENTING ARGUMENT.

Then there is another thing. You are to carry the thoughts in your sermon as the air or theme is carried in some musical compositions. Certain of the finest chorals will have the air carried throughout, sometimes by the soprano, sometimes by the contralto, sometimes by the tenor, and sometimes by the bass. So with your argument; it must be borne by different parts of your sermon. Sometimes it must be put forward by an illustration, sometimes by an appeal to the feelings, sometimes by a process of reasoning, and sometimes by the imagination. Your argument is not to be all one stereotyped expression of thought

Frequently a speaker will make a statement, and then laboriously lay out the track from that statement clear over to the next point, thus using up precious time. But there is such a thing as striking at once to a man's conscience by bounding over the whole logical process, abbreviating both space and time, and gaining conviction.

What do you want? You do not want an argument for the sake of an argument. You do not want a sermon that is as perfect a machine as a machine can be, unless it *does* something. You want the people; and the shortest and surest way to get them is the best way. When you are preaching a sermon which has been prepared with a great deal of care, and are laying down the truth with forcible arguments, you will often find that you are losing your hold on the attention of your people by continuing in that direction. But coming to a fortunate point, strike out an illustration which arouses and interests them, — leave the track of your argument, and never mind what becomes of your elaborate sermon, and you will see the heavy and uninterested eyes lighting up again. "But," you say, "that will make my sermon unsymmetrical." Well, were you called to preach for the sake of the salvation of sermons? Just follow the stream, and use the bait they are biting at, and take no heed of your sermon.

You will find it almost impossible to carry forward the demonstration of a truth in one straight course and yet make it real to a general audience. You must vary your method constantly, and at the same time through it all you can carry the burden of your discourse so that it shall be made clear to the whole of your audience. An argument may as well go forward by illustration as by abstract statement; sometimes it will go better.

ILLUSTRATIONS BRIDGE DIFFICULT PLACES.

Then there is another element for you to consider. Illustrations are invisible tactics. A minister often

hovers between the "ought to do," and the "how to do." He knows there is a subject that ought to be preached about; and yet, if he should deliberately preach on that topic, everybody would turn around and look at Mr. A., who is the very embodiment of that special vice or fault or excellence.

There are many very important themes which a minister may not desire to preach openly upon, for various reasons, especially if he wish to remain in the parish. But there are times when you can attain your object by an illustration pointed at the topic, without indicating whom you are hitting, but continuing your sermon as though you were utterly unconscious of the effect of your blow.

When I was settled at Indianapolis, nobody was allowed to say a word on the subject of slavery. They were all red-hot out there then; and one of the Elders said, "If an abolitionist comes here, I will head a mob to put him down." I was a young preacher. I had some pluck; and I felt, and it grew in me, that that was a subject that ought to be preached upon; but I knew that just as sure as I preached an abolition sermon they would blow me up sky high, and my usefulness in that parish would be gone. Yet I was determined they should hear it, first or last. The question was, "How shall I do it?" I recollect one of the earliest efforts I made in that direction was in a sermon on some general topic. It was necessary to illustrate a point, and I did it by picturing a father ransoming his son from captivity among the Algerines, and glorying in his love of liberty and his fight against bondage. They all thought I was going to apply it to slavery, but

I did not. I applied it to my subject, and it passed off; and they all drew a long breath.

It was not long before I had another illustration from that quarter. And so, before I had been there a year, I had gone over all the sore spots of slavery, in illustrating the subjects of Christian experience and doctrine. It broke the ice.

You may say that that was not the most honorable way, and that it was a weakness. It may have been so; but I conquered them by that very weakness.

If you find that it is necessary to do a thing, make up your mind to do it. If you cannot accomplish it in the very best way, do it by the next best, and so on; but see to it that it is *done* by the best means at your command. Go to the bottom of it, and work at it until you attain the desired result.

Thus, in using an illustration pointed at a certain fault or weakness among your people, as I have done a thousand times (and I speak within bounds), never let it be known that you are aiming at any particular individual. Sometimes a person will say to me, "There is great distress in such a family, and they will be in your church; can't you say something that will be useful to them?" If I were to bring that case right before the congregation, in all its personal details, it would scandalize the church, and repel the very people whom I wanted to help. But suppose, while I am preaching, I imagine a case of difference between husband and wife, who are, perhaps, hard, suspicious, and unforgiving toward each other, and I take the subject of God's forgiveness, and illustrate it by the conduct of two couples, one of which stands on a high

and noble plane, and the other on a low, selfish plane. They do not suppose that I know anything about their difficulty, because, when I am hitting a man with an illustration, I never look at him. But such a man or woman will go home, and say, "Why, if somebody had been telling him of my case, he could not have hit it more exactly." They take it to heart, and it is blessed unto them. I have seen multitudes of such cases.

You may go down to the brook under the willows and angle for the trout that everybody has been trying to catch, but in vain. You go splashing and tearing along, throwing in your pole, line and all. Do you think you can catch him that way? No, indeed; you must begin afar off and quietly; if need be, drawing yourself along on the grass, and perhaps even on your belly, until you come where through the quivering leaves you see the flash of the sun, and then slowly and gently you throw your line around, so that the fly on its end falls as light as a gossamer upon the placid surface of the brook. The trout will think, "That is not a bait thrown to catch me; there is nobody there," and he rises to the fly, takes it, and you take him.

So there are thousands of persons in the world that you will take if they do not know that you are after them, but whom you could not touch if they suspected your purpose. Illustrations are invaluable for this kind of work, and there is nothing half so effective.

THEY EDUCATE THE PEOPLE.

I notice that in a prayer-meeting which has grown up under a minister who illustrates, all the members of

the church illustrate too. They all begin to see visions, and to catch likenesses and resemblances. This becomes a habit, and it is to them a pathfinder or a starfinder, as it were. It leads men to look at truth, not only in one aspect, but in all its bearings, and to make analogies and illustrations for themselves, and thus brings them into the truth. By this means you bring up your congregation to understand the truth more easily than you would by any other method.

NECESSITY OF VARIETY.

But to continue illustrations for any considerable time you must draw them from various sources. To do this you must study the natural world, the different phases of human society, and the life of the household, in moral colors. These are inexhaustible sources from which to draw the needful instruction.

If you are preaching to pedants, you may properly enough illustrate by the ancient classics; but if you are preaching to common people you must not confine yourself to that course, although it is allowable, once in a while, to use some illustration drawn from the heroes of ancient history and mythology. But what may be called scholarly illustrations are not generally good for the common people. They may serve to impress the more ignorant with a sense of your knowledge, but that is not what you are called to preach for. That would be a poor business.

In the development of this faculty of illustration it is necessary to know the philosophy of it. All illustrations, to be apt, should touch your people where their level is. I do not know that this art can be learned;

but I may suggest that it is a good thing, in looking over an audience, to cultivate the habit of seeing illustrations *in them*. If I see a seaman sitting among my audience, I do not say "I will use him as a figure," and apply it personally; but out of him jumps an illustration from the sea, and it comes to seek me out. If there be a watchmaker present that I happen to recognize, my next illustration will very likely be from horology; though he will be utterly unconscious of the use I have made of him. Then I see a school-mistress, and my next illustration will be out of school-teaching. Thus, where your audience is known to you, the illustration ought not simply to meet your wants as a speaker, but it should meet the wants of your congregation, it should be a help to them.

HOMELY ILLUSTRATIONS.

You must not be afraid to illustrate truths in an undignified manner. Young gentlemen, where you cannot help yourselves, you have a right to be dignified; but this cant and talk about dignity is the most shabby and miserable pretense of pride and of an artificial culture. There is nothing so dignified as a man *in earnest*. It is that which approves itself to the moral consciousness of every hearer. If, besides that, you are naturally graceful and handsome, and your thoughts flow in a certain high order, so much the better; but if they do not, and you assume the pretense of it, and put on the mask of these things without having the inward soul, you are base.

Now, in respect to truth, do not be ashamed to explain it by homely illustrations. Do not be ashamed

to talk to the miller about his mill, or to the plowman about his plow, and about the grubs that are under it, and about every part of it. If you are going to be a master in your business, you must know about all these things yourself. Having eyes, you must see; having ears, you must hear; and having a heart, you must understand. A minister ought to be the best informed man on the face of the earth. He ought to see everything, inquire about everything, and be interested in everything. You may ask, "Shall I treasure up illustrations?" Yes; if that is your way, you may do so; if not, you will very soon find it out. You must know what is the best method for yourself. You cannot pattern on anybody else. Imitations are always poor stuff. You must find out the thing meant for you, and then do the best you can. You must be faithful in the place where God put you, and for which you are equipped. A minister is not a man to know books alone. He must know books, and study them profoundly. You must be conversant with the thoughts and deeds of the noble minds of every age of the world. There is much for you in history and in libraries, in the discourse of your equals, in the conversation of scholarly men. But this fact ought you not to overlook nor to neglect, that you are God's shepherds, for the sheep and for the lambs as well. You ought to know about the woman's spinning-wheel, about the weaver's loom and every part of it. You ought to know about the gardener's thoughts, his ambitions and feelings. You ought to know what is done in the barn, in the cellar, in the vineyard, and everywhere. You ought to know and understand a naturalist's enthusiasm

when he finds a new flower or a new bug, — that ecstasy is almost like a heaven of heavens to the apocalyptic John! You must study men, women, and children, their weaknesses and their strong sides. You must live among men, and be sentient and conscious of what they are, and what they think about. And when you come to preach, it is for you to draw an illustration in the range where your hearers live, whether it be high or low; and you must change them continually, providing now for some, and now for others. But they must always be on a level with your audience, so that they will surge back and draw your hearers to you.

You must bring people to yourself, and not wait for them to come. As well might a new bucket of white oak, newly hooped, — the very best bucket to be had, — expect that water shall come up from the well to its level, while it simply hangs over the well-curb; it must go down to the water and bring it up. You must go down to your people. There must be a place where your yarn is joined on to their yarn, and it must be joined in one common thread.

ILLUSTRATIONS MUST BE APT.

Let me say to you, that, in using illustrations, you must be sure to make them always apposite. If you should undertake to "work ship" in an audience where there is a good old sea-captain, and you should make a mistake, and speak as though you thought the taffrail was the rudder, he would feel contempt for you. If I should hear a politician say that Job said, "Every tub must stand upon its own bottom," I should laugh at

him, and his illustration and quotation would not do me much good. When you are talking about matters that men know about, you must know just as much as they do. Never let a man in your congregation detect you in an inaccuracy if you can help it. If you speak about making wine, be sure you know about making it. (To do that, it is not necessary that you should know how to drink it, however!)

Therefore, always be learning.

HOW TO GET INFORMATION.

There are two points about learning. In the first place, never ask a question, if you can help it; and secondly, never let a thing go unknown for the lack of asking a question, if you cannot help it. Think it out first. Dig it out, study it, go around it, question yourself, and get it out. If you really cannot, then turn and ask somebody. See everything, and see it right, and use it as you go along.

A man's study should be everywhere, — in the house, in the street, in the fields, and in the busy haunts of men. You see a bevy of children in the window, and you can form them into a picture in your mind. You may see the nurse, and the way she is dressed. You try to describe it. You look again, and make yourself master of the details. By and by it will come up to you again itself, and you will be able to make an accurate picture of it, having made your observation accurate. Little by little, this habit will grow, until by and by, in later life, you will find that you command respect by your illustrations just as much as by arguments and analogies.

ILLUSTRATIONS MUST BE PROMPT.

Then, again, while elaborate allegories and fables are very good things, and may be used with discretion, illustrations, so called, ought always to be clean, accurate, and *quick*. Do not let them dawdle on your hands. There is nothing that tires an audience so much as when they have to think faster than you do. You have got to keep ahead of them. Do you know what it is to walk behind slow people and tread on their heels? How it tires and vexes one! You know how people are vexed with a preacher who is slow and dilatory, and does not get along. He tires people out, for though he may have only six or seven words of his sentence completed, they know the whole of it; and what is the use, then, of his uttering the rest?

With illustrations, there should be energy and vigor in their delivery. Let them come with a crack, as when a driver would stir up his team. The horse does not know anything about it until the crack of the whip comes. So with an illustration. Make it sharp. Throw it out. Let it come better and better, and the best at the last, and then be done with it.

THE HABIT OF ILLUSTRATING.

In regard to the gift of illustrating, and the education of it, it is the same as with all other things. Some men are born mathematicians; and whatever they do, that will be the strongest impulse in their intellectual natures. Other men are a little less endowed in that direction, and others still less; but almost everybody has enough of the arithmetical faculty on which to

build an education. It is so also in poetry and in music. You are educable.

In regard to illustration, you will find persons who are instinctively given to it. Many of you will find it natural to you. But do not be discouraged, even when it is natural, if you do not at once succeed. Why should you succeed before you learn the rudiments of your art? Why should you be able to run before you can walk? Practice by yourselves to imaginary audiences; make illustrations and use them; train yourselves to it. If once or twice on every Sabbath day you can make a fitting illustration and see that you have gained ground by it, take courage, and you will improve day by day and year by year.

I can say, for your encouragement, that while illustrations are as natural to me as breathing, I use fifty now to one in the early years of my ministry. For the first six or eight years, perhaps, they were comparatively few and far apart. But I developed a tendency that was latent in me, and educated myself in that respect; and that, too, by study and practice, by hard thought, and by a great many trials, both with the pen, and extemporaneously by myself, when I was walking here and there. Whatever I have gained in that direction is largely the result of education. You need not, therefore, be discouraged if it does not come to you immediately. You cannot be men at once in these things. This world is God's anvil, and whatever is fit for the battle has been beaten out on that anvil, and it has felt the fire before it has felt the blow. So that whatever you would get in this world that is worth having, you must work for. Do not be cast

down. Be brave, industrious, disinterested, simple, and true-hearted. Whatever God means to give you for your usefulness will certainly come to you.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Do you think the use of these encyclopædias of illustrations is honest?

MR. BEECHER. — Why not?

STUDENT. — Because one ought to make his illustrations himself, I should say.

MR. BEECHER. — That is purely a question with yourself. If a man says he would rather take the pains and time to work out his illustrations himself, he has a perfect right to do so. It is just the same question that comes up in everything else. "Do you think a man ought to copy pictures, or to study from nature?" One school will tell you one thing, and another school another thing. It is simply a matter of preference. I should not borrow my illustrations a great while if I could help it; but if you find that you accomplish your designs in preaching, and at the same time improve yourself by practicing in that way, it is allowable.

Q. Is it best to give your illustrations extemporaneously, even when the sermon is written?

MR. BEECHER. — Yes, and no. Sometimes it is, and sometimes it is not. Some of your carefully written-out illustrations would die between your attempting to remember and attempting to originate. There is nothing worse than to get into the place where those two processes meet. You will hear a person say, "I

have either to read my sermons or else make brief notes and not read at all." The difficulty is that if you have your notes well written out and then look up from them and undertake to extemporize, you will be extemporizing, as it were, with one eye, and thinking of what is in your notes with the other; so that you will really rest on neither, but go down between the two processes. No man can extemporize until he cuts the cord that holds him to his sermon. You cannot extemporize while you are thinking of anything other than the impulse which is carrying you on.

Q. Would you advocate special services for children, at times?

MR. BEECHER. — Yes. It is a very excellent plan indeed. I think every parish should have a periodical service for children. Dr. Storrs has had a regular series of discourses for his children, and it has been one of the most excellent features of his ministry in Brooklyn.

Q. About how much poetry is necessary to spice a sermon?

MR. BEECHER. — Of quotations I should say, generally none. Of poetical treatment and illustration, it "depends." Poetry, you know, is not a thing that you can measure and put in by quantity. If your theme suggests illustrations which are poetical, take and use them; but to determine that you will have a definite quantity of them will kill inspiration in the very egg.

Q. Is there not danger of getting into a loose way of sermonizing, by not preparing your illustrations beforehand, but just taking them as they strike you in the pulpit?

MR. BEECHER.— Yes; and there is danger of getting into too severe a habit, if you prepare in the other way.

There is danger any way. You cannot prepare in any way so that you can say to yourself, "Now I am sure of success; I need not give myself any further responsibility." For, if there is a working-man on earth, it is the man who undertakes to preach continually and steadily to an ordinary congregation. Let me say to you, gentlemen, never be frightened because you have preached a bad sermon; but, at the same time, never, under any circumstances whatever, preach a bad sermon on purpose, or by negligence or carelessness. If you are not in a good condition for work, if you are sick, never apologize, but do the best you can, even though knowing you are doing it very poorly. That is not a pleasant experience, as I can bear witness. Preach the best you can, under the circumstances, without apology. If you are preaching to but six people, do the best thing you can do. Do it always and everywhere.

Q. Is it a proper thing to make an audience laugh by an illustration?

Mr. Beecher. — Never turn aside from a laugh any more than you would from a cry. Go ahead on your Master's business, and do it well. And remember this, that every faculty in you was placed there by the dear Lord God for his service. Never *try* to raise a laugh for a laugh's sake, or to make men merry as a piece of sensationalism, when you are preaching on solemn things. That is allowable at a picnic, but not in a pulpit where you are preaching to men in regard to God and their own destiny. But if mirth comes up naturally, do not stifle it; strike that chord, and particularly if you want to make an audience cry. If I

can make them laugh, I do not thank anybody for the next move; I will make them cry. Did you ever see a woman carrying a pan of milk quite full, and it slops over on one side, that it did not immediately slop over on the other also?

Q. If a man "slops over" on some occasions, is he not liable to "slop over" continually?

Mr. Beecher. — Not long in one place, if he does it continually. If you take the liberty, however, from what I have said, to quote stale jokes; if you make queer turns because they will make people laugh, and to show you have power over the congregation, you will prove yourselves contemptible fellows. But if, when you are arguing any question, the thing comes upon you so that you see a point in a ludicrous light, you can sometimes flash it at your audience, and accomplish at a stroke what you were seeking to do by a long train of argument, and that is entirely allowable. In such a case do not attempt to suppress laughter. It is a part of the nature that God gave us, and which we can use in his service. When you are fighting the Devil, shoot him with anything.

Q. Would not a man, under such circumstances, be in danger of overturning just what he was trying to accomplish?

Mr. Beecher. — No; unless he accompanies it very poorly.

If a minister is earnest and honest, and a man of God, if he bears about him the savor of the heavenly world and the benevolence of this life, his people will know it. If you know the difference between a man who is in earnest and one who is merely playing, do

you suppose the people will respond to the superficial and lower qualities, and not to the greater and nobler ones in a true preacher?

Q. How long would you advise a young man to preach?

Mr. Beecher. — As long as he can make his people take his sermon. That is very much like asking how long a coat you should have made for people, in general.

VIII.

HEALTH, AS RELATED TO PREACHING.

THERE has been, in recent times, a great deal more information diffused among the common people on the subject of health than formerly, and men live more wholesomely, and all the processes of society are in better accordance with the laws of life. Men have more intelligent ideas of what to avoid and what to seek.

There is one relation, however, to which I shall more particularly confine myself to-day, which has been largely left out of the popular consideration, and that is the relation of health to brain-work.

If you take a full stem of wheat in harvest-time, and shake out all the kernels of wheat, what is left is chaff and straw. So, if you take from a man his brain-power, all that is left of him is chaff and straw; that is, it is nothing but animal. All there is of a man lies in the nerve and brain power; and while the business of life is to take care of the bone and muscle, the stomach, the liver, the lungs, and the heart, that is only because this is the way to take care of that which is, after all, the sovereign, and for which all these other

things are merely servants and messengers and purveyors. It is the brain-power, or the mental power as expressed through the brain, that causes man to surpass the lower creations around him.

Now, it is not very difficult for a man to live in the enjoyment of good health who is born with a good constitution, which he has not in youth drained and sapped, and who has come into a noble and virtuous manhood, and into a profession that will keep him within proper bounds of exertion. But you must remember that you are going to be under fire. Let a man be in the midst of a desperate naval engagement, where the shot and shell are filling the air, and the splinters flying thick as hail, he will find it is not so easy to pass unscathed. Let a man be in the midst of an awakened community, where all the members of two hundred families have a right to go to his fire and light their torches; where he is obliged to preach Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday, and twice on Sunday; where he is visited by all; where he must preside at prayer-meetings and social gatherings; and where he has to be a perpetual fountain, out of which so many different hydrants are drawing their supplies, — then to keep one's health is a very different thing.

There are few men in the ministry who live at one half their competency or power. They do not know how to make their machines work at a high rate of speed, with great executive energy, without damage to themselves. It is an art to be healthy at all; but to be healthy when you are run at the top of your speed all the time is a great art indeed.

WHAT IS HEALTH?

Let me tell you that when I speak of health, I do not mean merely not being sick. I divide people into, first, the sick folk; secondly, the not-sick folk; thirdly, the almost-healthy folk; and fourthly — and they are the elect — the folk that are healthy. What I mean by "health" is such a feeling or tone in every part of a man's body or system that he has the natural language of health. What is the natural language of health? Look at four-months-old puppies, and see. Look at kittens, and see. Look at children, from the time they are three or four or five years old. Look at young men, when they are at school and at the academy. They cannot eat enough, nor holloa enough, nor run enough, nor wrestle enough. They are just *full*. It is buoyancy. It is the insatiable desire of play and of exertion.

The nature of the human constitution, in a state of health, is to be a creative instrument or agent; and the necessity in a man to be creating outside of himself is one of the noblest tokens of health. When one has been kept at work and under the yoke, he has played off his surplus energy in the various channels of his business activities. We do not expect a man to bound and caper about, for the simple reason that he has other legitimate channels to work off his steam in. But let him get a vacation. He goes to the White Mountains. He has three or four days of uncaring rest and nights of long sleep, and then he awakes to the stimulus of the mountains. "Well," he says, "I feel like a boy again," which is only another way of saying, "I feel my health."

His system is not perverted. He is rested in all his parts, and that vast amount of energy and vitality which he generates, but which in the city was worked off in professional labors and social relations, is now being collected again; the measure of the instrument is filled and it pours over. A man in health is a fountain, and he flows over at the eye, at the lip, and all the time, by every species of action and demonstration.

I have often seen what are called over-shot wheels, where they have a very small and weak stream. They get a wheel of large diameter, and the buckets are made in a peculiar form, sloping from the mouth up. Then comes a little trickling stream which pours down into the big buckets its slow accumulation of water-weight, and it begins to turn the wheel very moderately and gradually, and so it goes. That is about the condition in which average men are working, with just enough power to turn an over-shot wheel. But if you have a great, full, strong stream, the mere impact of which on the wheel is enough to turn it, then the wheel is made under-shot, and the water comes dashing against the breast and bottom of it, and around it goes, promptly and rapidly. The miller says, "What do I care? I have got the whole stream. There is no use in economizing my water; I will let it flow," and the water runs all the time. There are very few men that can afford to run on an under-shot wheel. Almost all men are economists of their resources, because they have not this real high health.

HEALTH AND THOUGHT.

As to the direct bearing of this bodily condition on your coming duties, let me say, first, men in a high state of health invariably see more sharply the truth that they are after. They see its relations and its fitness. They have a sense of direction, combination, and of the power of relations of truth to emotion. The old-fashioned way of preparing a sermon was where a man sat down with his pipe, and smoked and "thought," as he called it, and after one or two or three hours, — his wife saying to everybody in the mean time, "Dear man, he is up stairs studying; he has to study so hard!" — in which he has been in a muggy, fumbling state of mind, he at last comes out with the product of it for the pulpit. It is like unleavened bread, doughy, dumpy, and heavy, — hard to eat, and harder to digest. There has been nothing put in it to vitalize it. But when a man is in a perfect state of health, no matter where he goes, he is sensitive to social influence and to social wants. He discovers men's necessities instinctively. He is very quick to choose the instrument by which to minister to those necessities, so that when he goes to his study he has something to do, *and he knows what it is.*

He is accurate in his thinking. Is there no difference in the varying moods of the draughtsman? Take him with a bilious headache. Do you suppose he can make his strokes so that every line of his drawing shall express thought? Some people say, "Why, there are times when I can do more in a day than in a week at other times," which is true, because at those periods the

system is in a perfect condition of health. Suppose you could have that condition always, what workers you would be! How it would sharpen your comprehension of the various relations of truth, and with what ease could you see and handle them! For all these things are largely dependent upon health. You cannot drudge them out.

Men are said to have genius. What is genius but a condition of fiber, and a condition of health in fiber? It is nothing in the world but automatic thinking. And what is automatic thinking? It is thought that *thinks itself*, instead of being run up or worried up to think. Whoever thinks without thinking is in fact a genius. In music, it is said that it "makes itself." In arithmetic or mechanics, the demonstration "comes" to you. You do not think it out, except automatically. Real thinking ought to be automatic action, and almost unconscious. Under such circumstances, your intuitions and your sudden automatic thinking, nine times out of ten, will be true; and when you send slow-footed Logic afterward to measure the footsteps and the way over which your thoughts have traveled, Logic will come back and report, "Well, I did not believe it, but he was right, after all." So, then, for sharpness and accuracy and complexity of thinking, in which much of your life ought to lie, you require the best conditions of health in the system by which you think.

HEALTH IN SPEAKING.

The next step is where you come to speak what you have thought. You know how beautifully some men

write, and how poorly they deliver; how well they prepare their materials, and yet their materials when prepared are of no force whatever. They are beautiful arrows, — arrows of silver; golden-tipped are they, and winged with the feathers of the very bird of paradise. But there is no bow to draw the arrows to the head and shoot them strongly home, and so they all fall out of the sheath down in front of the pulpit or platform. People say, "Those sermons are fit to be printed," — and they are fit for nothing else. They are essays. They are sections of books. But what the preacher wants is the power of having something that is worth saying, and then the power of saying it. He is to hold the light up so that a blind man cannot help feeling that it is falling on his orbs. He needs to put the truth in such a way that if a man were asleep it would wake him up; and if he were dead, it would give him resurrection for the hour.

A man that breaks his backbone every time he explodes a vowel, — how can he do it?

POPULAR ORATORS.

Who are the speakers that move the crowd, — men after the pattern of Whitefield, what are they? They are almost always men of very large physical development, men of very strong digestive powers, and whose lungs have great aërating capacity. They are men of great vitality and recuperative force. They are men who, while they have a sufficient thought-power to create all the material needed, have pre-eminently the explosive power by which they can thrust their materials out at men. They are catapults, and men go

down before them. Of course you will find men now and then, thin and shrill-voiced, who are popular speakers. Sometimes men are organized with a compact nervous temperament and are slender framed, while they have a certain concentrated earnestness, and in narrow lines they move with great intensity. John Randolph was such a man.

THRUST-POWER.

I desire to call your attention to this force-giving power, that which lends impetuosity, that which gives what I might call *lunge* to a man's preaching.

Why should you waste your time every Sunday morning and night, without being conscious of having done anything? You can afford to do it occasionally, as there is wastage in all systems; but a man who goes on preaching when there is no evidence of accomplishment is like a windmill that the boys put on the top of a house; it goes around and around, but it grinds nothing below. Preaching is *business*, young gentlemen. It means the hardest kind of work.

There is nothing else in this world that requires so many resources, so much thought, so much sagacity, so much constant application, so much freshness, such intensity of conception within, and such power of execution without, as genuine preaching. Ministers sometimes think they do their duty by resting chiefly on their faithful pastoral labors, but they do not half bring out the preaching-power, when they rely on the indirect and social influences that are connected with it. One should help the other. You are to bring out the preaching-element, if it is in you; for, in this age,

preaching is almost everything. This is pre-eminently the talking age. A preacher must be a good talker, and must have something in him that is worth talking about. People say, "Show me a man of deeds, and not of words." You might as well say, "Show me a field of corn; I don't care about clouds and rain." Talking makes thought and feeling, and thought and feeling make action. Show me a man of words who knows how to incite noble deeds!

HEALTH AS A CHEERING INFLUENCE.

But, once more, it is impossible for a man who is an invalid to sustain a cheerful and hopeful ministry among his people. An invalid looks with a sad eye upon human life. He may be sympathetic, but it is almost always with the shadows that are in the world. He will give out moaning and drowsy hymns. He will make prayers that are almost all piteous. It may not be a minister's fault if he be afflicted and ill, and administers his duties in mourning and sadness, but it is a vast misfortune for his people.

If there is anything in this world that is the product of wholesome, healthy souls, it is the hope-giving and joyful comforter. If there was ever a system of joy and hope in the world, prefigured by the prophets, and afterward characterized by the Sun of Righteousness, it is that ardent and hope-inspiring gospel that you are to preach. You are not sent out to tell of the dungeon and the pit, the shackle and the yoke, — except as redeemed by the power of Jesus Christ into rest and peace. And the very product of the gospel which you are to carry to mankind is hope and cheer. It is good news.

You find men struggling with cares. They stand where a dozen ways meet, in utter perplexity, and they want the best advice you can give. Your Sunday ought to bring this witness from your flock every single month of your ministry: "If it had not been for the refreshment that I got on Sundays I never could have carried my burdens." The sweetest praises that ministers can ever have are from the house of trouble, from men in bankruptcy, from men hunted by perverse fortune almost to the bounds of suicide. They come to you, and say, "Sir, it was the cheer and comfort of your preaching that helped me through, or I never could have endured it." That will be better than any guerdon and any compliment. We are sent to men that are cheerless, men in distress, men who are burdened; and we have no business to have any other ministry than that which is based on the sweet teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must learn ardor and fervor from St. Paul's interpretation of them. We must tell of love, hope, courage, and the cheering prospect of a blessed immortality. What business have you to turn all this into a minor symphony? But you cannot do otherwise, unless you keep yourselves healthy, cheerful, hopeful, and buoyant. You must call in to your assistance all the help you can derive from the highest conditions of bodily health.

HEALTHFUL VIEWS OF CHRISTIANITY.

Then there is a relation of this question in another direction. I think the minister of a parish, who has been there for five years, ought to impress upon the young people of his parish the practical idea, that to

be a Christian is to be the happiest person in the world. Men say, "Let us have our enjoyment here, and have a good time; then, when we have had it, and tasted what there is to be tasted, we had better be pious." That is about the idea of it. It is a gloomy and dismal thing; but, to a certain extent, we are to blame for this false notion.

Now it seems to me that we ought to make known what is unquestionably the truth, namely, that Christianity aims only at a nobler style of manhood, and at a better and happier style of living. Christianity means friendship carried up into a sphere where by the natural man you could never elevate it. It means the purest enjoyments of earth as well as heaven. It means that life shall blossom like Aaron's rod. And every man who is a true Christian is one who has lived up to the measure of his competency, in a bright and joyful life, compared with which all other lives are low and ignoble. The Apostle Paul, after going through a long line of exhortations to virtue, finally wound up by saying, "Whatever is lovely and of good report, think on these things."

A true minister, in order to inspire his congregation with this noble conception of a Christian character and a Christian life, must have something in him. He cannot go around with lead in his shoes, nor yet in his head. He cannot drudge and complain. A man of God ought to strike men among whom he moves as being more manly than anybody else; certainly, never less. You should bear in mind that you are twice ordained, — once, when your mother laid her hand in love upon your just-born head, after giving you your organi-

zation and nature; and, again, by the Holy Ghost, later in life, to give you a fuller development. If you are not a man, what business have you in the ministry? You have mistaken your vocation. You may do to make some other things, but you will not be a maker of men. It takes a *man* to refashion men. You cannot do it unless you have some sort of vigor, vitality, versatility, moral impulse, and social power in you. And if you have these things, how they will win! How men will want to come to you! They tell me that the pulpit is losing its power, that religion is going under, and that science is to rule. I will put genuine manly religion against all the science in the world.

HEALTH AS A SWEETENER OF WORK.

I have seen a great deal of life, and on all of its sides. I have seen the depths of poverty, and I have seen competency. I have seen the extremity of solitariness, and the crowds of a city, both at home and abroad. I have seen what art has done, and whatever is to be seen in the wilderness. I have had youth and middle age, and now I am an old man. I have seen it all, and I bear witness that, while there are single moments of joy in other matters that, perhaps, carry a man up to the summit of feeling, yet for steadfast and repetitious experience there is no pleasure in this world comparable to that which a man has who habitually stands before an audience with an errand of truth, which he feels in every corner of his soul and in every fiber of his body, and to whom the Lord has given liberty of utterance, so that he is pouring out the whole manhood

in him upon his congregation. Nothing in the world is comparable to that. It goes echoing on in you after you get through. Once in a while I preach sermons that leave me in such a delightful state of mind that I do not get over it for two days; and I wonder that I am not a better man. I feel it all day Sunday and Monday, and there is not an organ in the world that makes music so grand to me as I feel in such supreme hours and moments. But I am conscious how largely the physical element of healthfulness enters into this experience. When I am depressed in body and heavy in mind I do not get it. You cannot expect either these exceptional, higher consummations, or the strong, steady flow of a joyful relish for your work, unless you cultivate a robust and healthful manhood.

PRACTICAL HINTS.

I will now suggest to you some practical directions, which are very largely the result of my personal experience, and which may be profitable to you. You must excuse any egotism I may exhibit. As I understand it, these lectures are nothing but a branch of the regular chair of Pastoral Theology, and I am to explain here in its practical form that which, in its philosophical form, Professor Hoppin gives you in his instructions at other times. Experience is always egotism, and that is what I am here to give you.

To begin with, I will say that I had this advantage, that my father was a dyspeptic. From my earliest childhood I noticed the great watchfulness and skill with which he took care of himself, and now and then he dropped words of advice. When I went into the

ministry, I remembered some of his maxims and some of his incidental utterances. They led me to think about caring for my own health; I did not know much about it, but I thought about it. I "watched' it, as the engineers say on the road. A good engineer watches both the engine and the road. And now, as the result of between thirty and forty years of incessant preaching, I give you these hints in regard to the care of your health.

MUSCULAR STRENGTH NOT ENOUGH.

When I first began, I had an impression that if I had good bone and muscle I should be all right. I very soon learned that it was possible for a man to take too much exercise, and that a man could be built up physically at the expense of his brain. You are sufficiently acquainted with aquatic and other sports to know that you may over-train a man, so that he is carried beyond his highest power. Now, if you undertake, as scholars, very violent exercise, according to the exaggerated idea of muscular Christianity, you will very soon use up all the vitality of your system in the bone-and-muscle development, and it will leave you, not better, but less fitted for intellectual exertion. Yet there must be enough care given to bone and muscle to furnish a good platform, on which your artillery is to stand.

THE ART OF EATING.

Next comes the stomach. In regard to that, everybody feels that he must not be a glutton nor a gormand, but there is very little discrimination and very

little observation as to the quantity and quality and the times and seasons of eating. Preachers may be divided into two great classes: the sanguineous class, who cannot eat much if they are going to think or speak; and the class who have the extreme nervous temperament, who cannot speak or work unless they do eat. On Sunday morning, when I wake, my first thought is that it is Sunday morning, and the very idea of it takes away my appetite. I go down, drink a cup of coffee, and eat an egg and half a slice of toast. That is all I can eat. There is just enough to sustain my system. Then I preach, and, if I have not done very well, I am hungry; but if I have done very well, I cannot eat much dinner. That is because there is a reaction of the nervous influence of the system. The whole system is working so much by the brain and the nerves that the stomach does not crave anything. Just as great grief, or fear, or any other extreme passion, takes away appetite, so does active preaching. Ordinarily, I take but a moderate dinner on Sunday. Supper with me is at five o'clock in the afternoon, and I usually take a cup of tea and a small piece of cracker. That is all I can take. Then I go to my evening work, and when I get through, I sometimes am satisfied to take nothing but an orange, which I eat to give my stomach something to do until morning, and to keep it from craving, — for often a fit of craving will give one a nightmare as quickly as overfeeding will. At other times I feel a strong appetite, and then I eat. Perhaps once out of five Sundays I eat more just after preaching, morning or evening, than I do all the rest of the day put together. The system indicates it, and

therefore I am not harmed by it. It does not disturb my sleep, and digestion goes on perfectly.

Now the point I take is, not that you shall follow this, but that you shall find out, accurately, in regard to your own eating, what obstructs and what does not obstruct your mental operations. If you go to your study after a hearty breakfast, and you find it takes you from eight o'clock to eleven before you really get into your work, you may be pretty sure that you have overloaded your stomach, and that the energies of your system have been so busy in the work of digestion that you could not call them off to do brain-work. But if you get up from the table after a comparatively light meal, which requires but little digestion, and when you go into your study find that you can apply yourself at once to your labor, it is because you have eaten in due proportion to the needs of your system. Eating is to the work of the human body just what the firing up of an engine is to traveling. Eating is a means to an end. It is not a habit nor a social custom merely. It is not a question of luxury. Do men eat stupidly, and simply because they are hungry? You eat to make working force; and as the engineer keeps his eye all the time on the steam-gauge to know the number of pounds of pressure, and to regulate it to the various conditions of going up or down grade or on a level, and to the number of passengers he is carrying, so does a man eat, or so ought he to eat, all the time gauging himself. You have, in fact, to eat much or little, according to the work you have to do. When you come back from a journey, you must be careful not to overwork yourself, and not to eat too much. If you are in

regular harness and are working, you ought to know what you shall eat. Your business is to eat so that you can think and work, and not for self-indulgence only.

QUANTITY OF SLEEP.

The same holds good in respect to sleep. Many men, going into the ministry, have broken down from want of sleep. I will say a few things on that point. In the first place, sleep, that was reckoned involuntary, like many other involuntary things, can to a certain extent be brought under the dominion of habit and the will. There is no doubt but that the human will is the strongest power in this world, next to death. A man who says, "By the grace of God I WILL," and who feels it in his bones, in his muscles, and in his whole being, can do almost anything. Now it may seem a little singular, but it is true, that if you are possessed of a very nervous organization you will need less sleep than if you are of a phlegmatic temperament. If a man is dull, lethargic, and slow, eight or nine hours of sleep is necessary for him. But, if he is nervous, lithe, thin, quick, vividly sensitive, so that he is all the time letting out sparks somewhere, he will require but from five to seven hours' sleep. That seems very strange, but it is just as simple as anything can be. Sleep is an active operation, during which the process of assimilation goes on. Now, the nervous man eats quickly, works quickly, and sleeps quickly. He does just as much work while he is sleeping six hours as the lethargic man does in seven or eight. A man who is slow and plethoric, who takes a breath before every word, and

who never has a quick motion, can never sleep quickly. He will be an hour in doing up as much work in his sleep as another man will do in forty minutes. The temperament acts throughout. Never gauge the duration of your sleep by the time any one else sleeps. Some men will tell you that John Wesley had only so much sleep, Hunter, the great physiologist, so much, and Napoleon so much sleep. When the Lord made you, as a general thing, he did not make Napoleons. Every man carries within himself a Mount Sinai, a revealed law, written for himself separately. You must administer sleep to yourselves according to your temperament, your constitution, and your wants. Something you may know presumptively, but principally you must learn by experience.

Sometimes, when men get into hard work, they are apt to sleep too much. Others, again, are inclined to sleep too little. Let me say to you here, that of all dire mistakes among young gentlemen, night study is the greatest. There may be some of you that can carry that out well. Some men are so tough that nothing will seem to affect them detrimentally. But I think that more than eighty per cent of ministers who indulge in night study abbreviate their lives, weaken their tone, and take away from themselves the fullness of their power. It is bad to do it.

BADLY REGULATED WORK.

It is especially bad for a preacher to prepare his sermons on Saturday night. It is bad for a man to keep his brain at the top of its power from early on Saturday to late at night, so that he sleeps in a fiery dream of

sermon. For then, he preaches on Sunday; and there are two days in which the brain is unintermittingly impleted and stimulated. It is hot and feverish. Then, worse than all, comes what is called "black Monday," a day upon which the minister throws off everything, and thus completely unstrings the bow.

You must give yourselves intervals of rest and play-time. But never let an excitement have such a rest that you run clear down. The way to cure an excitement is to meet it with another one. If you have preached all the week, and are keyed up very high, and you say to yourself, "Now I must rest," and you rest a day, but still the nervous excitement continues; and Sunday you call again upon your brain, which gives the response, you will, perhaps, be carried over Monday; but by Tuesday you begin to come down, and you think the earth is not so bright as it formerly seemed. You begin to think that you have mistaken your vocation, and that you will turn farmer. Then you have gone down as far as you ought. Some begin to see the blue devils at that point. You must meet fire with fire. A new excitement, *brought in from another quarter*, however, and of a different nature, will meet the old one, and on the ashes of the past you will build up a new flame.

I have sometimes had a whole month of undertone, because I let go and ran clear down, not knowing then how to meet one excitement with another, and thus carry myself along healthily.

For the Sabbath day, it seems to me that while it is important that you should train for thought and matter, it is only second in importance that you should train

also for *condition.* Now, no man who studies during the last part of the week so that he comes to Sunday with only the refuse of what he has in him, making it his weakest day, can come up to the requirements of his duty. He is kept in a continual state of excitement, passing from one strain to another without interval. No man is wise who does it. Saturday should be a play-day. I make it a day, not of laziness, but of genial, social, pleasurable exhilaration. I go up street and see pleasant people. I go and look at pictures. I have a great many sources of enjoyment that many of you could not enjoy. I love to see horses. I like to go on the street and see the different teams go by. I like to stand on the ferry-boat and see the splendid horses come on with their great loads. I like a Dexter. I like all fine horses, but I like the dray-horses, too. There is such a sense of might and power with them. They are almost as interesting as a locomotive engine — the finest thing man ever created, unless it be a watch. I like to go to Tiffany's. I ask, "What are your men doing to-day?" "Well," says Tiffany, "we will go down and see." We go down to the *ateliers*, watch the workmen silver-plating and engraving, and talk with them. It is a good thing for you to live close to common people, plain folks and working-men. It keeps you near to humanity as distinguished from artificiality and conventionalism. After I get home I enjoy myself quietly in the evening, and when Sunday comes I am impleted. I have fresh blood; and without *training* for condition, I have it. I feel like a race-horse. Sometimes I cannot wait for the time to come for me to go into the pulpit. I long

to speak. But this result cannot be attained by studying yourselves up, and coming into church on Sunday quite dry and desiccated.

SLEEP AFTER WORK.

People have often asked me how I managed to sleep after preaching. Generally, I do not have any difficulty in getting to sleep. I can always sleep after a good sermon, and even bad ones do not keep me awake long! You must remember that the reason why a man cannot sleep after excitement is because his brain is gorged with blood. The blood is the stimulus which works the brain, and the brain draws to itself all the blood it can get. I always know whether my brain has been doing its work well or not. If I find my hands and feet warm, I say generally that the product of my thought is not worth much; and I begin to think there has been a waste of brain-material. But if my hands and feet grow chilly, and I have to wrap up all over, on account of the blood, which is the working force, being drawn away from the extremities to the brain, I know that the thinking power has been busy,—has probably worked to some effect. You must deal with yourselves on this theory; whatever will distribute the blood to every part of your system will relieve the brain, and you will be able to go to sleep. In the first place, do not talk after preaching on Sunday nights. Do not go home and have a good time over what you have seen and heard. Many a minister uses himself up more by the after-piece than he does by the main performance. It is sweet to talk when you are in such fine condition! Everybody is there pouring out compliments upon you.

But they are wasting you. You are like the cocoon of a silkworm, which they are unwinding, and in so doing they take the life out of you. You never get through your work. I owe what I know of horticulture to the study I gave it at short intervals, when I was preaching every day for two years, and twice on Sunday, besides doing revival and other work. I got out of the State Library of Indiana four or five volumes of Loudon's works on agriculture and horticulture. I read them. There was a charm in reading even the names of the plants in the catalogues, although there was nothing very stimulating in it. It was like Webster's Dictionary, where the connection is broken at every word, and yet it is intensely interesting to read. In that way I let myself down quietly, and then I could go to sleep.

But suppose I cannot go to sleep? I get up from bed, and walk about the room without dressing myself. That is, I take an air-bath, and, if need be, I throw up the window, and keep on walking, not until I am chilled, but until I am pretty nearly chilled. The moment that any part of the human body is attacked, the vital forces rush to that part to repair any loss that may have taken place. If you take cold, the vital forces instantly attempt to establish the equilibrium. Bring cold to bear upon your body, and the vital forces instantly send out the blood to the part where the cold is, to restore the warmth, and that relieves the system. The blood ceases to be dammed up in the brain and in the large vessels.

But suppose I cannot sleep then; what is to be done? I say to myself, "Now, you have *got* to go to sleep; and the sooner you give up, the better it will be." So I walk into the bath-room, and turn on a little water, just

enough to put my feet and ankles into ; and it is very rare indeed that the obstinacy of my system resists that. This operation brings the blood down to the feet, and I can almost always get to sleep. If I cannot, I turn on a little more water and sit down in it.

All this is treating one's self physiologically, medically, so to speak, without medicine. It is treating one's self according to correct principles for the sake of procuring sleep. If you do not sleep, first or last, your audience will ; and therefore it is necessary that you should sleep for them, that they may keep awake to hear what you may have to say. More than that, when a man has gone through the paroxysm of the week, which is Sunday, it is necessary that he should, as soon as possible, be put into a state to go to work again.

Therefore you should eat as you would fire an engine ; and sleep, remembering that out of sleep comes the whole force of wakefulness, with the power you have in it.

There are many other points that I had in mind, but I have already taken so much of your time that I will not detain you longer, but will merely await your questions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Will you say a word as to the number of hours a man should spend in his study? How many hours a day, at the maximum ?

Mr. Beecher. — There is no absolute rule that can be given in all cases. I should think, however, that, at the maximum, a man can do as much in four hours'

work during the day as he needs to do. But it must be *work*. You can sometimes collect materials for your work, although you do not feel like working. You can ascertain the negative, if you cannot create the positive. Sometimes a man will study a whole day to find out that he cannot do a thing that he was counting on. But I do not think that any man can originate matter, and pursue a course of severe fruitful study, for more than four hours a day. I do not believe that he can average that. I think that ministers often attempt to study too much. If they would concentrate their power, and use it regularly, they would get out much more than by spreading it over so much ground.

Q. Should one do much in the way of preparing a sermon on Monday?

MR. BEECHER. — No; unless he is going to preach on Monday night. Saturday and Monday ought to be inclined planes, the former a very inclined plane up to Sunday, and the latter an inclined plane away from it. There are a great many things that a man can do on Monday, which are necessary to be done, but he should not gorge his brain on that day.

Q. Ought a man to prepare his sermons on Sunday morning, and make a practice of it?

MR. BEECHER. — If the Lord showed him that that was the best way of doing it, he should. I do not know whether you mean to be personal or not, but that is my habit.

When I went to Lawrenceburg, I went thinking that I would do the best I could. I had the vague general instructions that are given, to "lay deep foun-

dations, to study thoroughly, and to bring," as old Dr. Humphrey used to say, "nothing but the beaten oil into the sanctuary." I felt that this was connected with regular and incessant study during all the week. I tried to study so. I succeeded in studying, but I could not succeed in using what I had. On Sunday I could not do anything with what I had so laboriously dug out during the week. Of course, I increased my general stock of knowledge. Sometimes I would find that after working a subject up all the week, something else would take possession of me on Saturday, and I would have to preach it on Sunday to get rid of it. I felt ashamed and mortified, and began to fear I was on the way to superficiality. I made many promises, that, if God would help me, I would make my sermons a long time beforehand. I kept on making promises and breaking them, and the older I grew the worse I grew; and finally, in spite of prayers and resolutions, I had to give it up and prepare my sermons mostly on Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon. But then you must recollect that this was accompanied by another habit, — that of regular study and continual observation. I do not believe that I ever met a man on the street that I did not get from him some element for a sermon. I never see anything in nature which does not work toward that for which I give the strength of my life. The material for my sermons is all the time following me and swarming up around me. I am tracing out analogies, which I afterward take pains to verify, to see whether my views of certain truths were correct. I follow them out in my study, and see how such things are taught by others.

These things I do not always at the time formulate for use, but it is a process of accumulation. Now, by the peculiar temperament given to me, I am able, out of this material, when Sunday comes and I know what I want to do with my congregation, to bring up some instrument to do it with, some view of truth that will include in it a great many of the results reached long before by the practice I have been describing, and which are crystallized ready for use. In that way I make my sermons. Another man begins his on Tuesday, and he would be untrue to himself if he followed any other plan. Every man must find out the way he is to work. I would advise no young man to follow my method. It happens to be my way, but it is very likely not to be yours. You can find out, by trying, which is the best way for you to work.

IX.

SERMON-MAKING.

NOTHING could well be more unlike the preaching of the apostolic times than that which exists in the regular and organized churches of the modern days in Christendom.

I often wonder that there has been no sect formed upon the basis of preaching. The Church has been divided in reference to baptism, seeking a literal imitation of the primitive practice. It is organized and reorganized on the question of organization. The world has been full of contending sects upon matters of exact interpretation of doctrine. Almost the only possible point on which a sect could be built, that has been left unoccupied, is the sermon. Why have we not had sects declaring that we must preach sermons precisely after the patterns of the apostolic sermons ?

THE DISCOURSES OF JESUS.

The discourses of our Lord were in form, method, and genius, eminently Jewish. He was regarded by the common people as a superior Rabbi. He certainly adopted methods that were then current, of teaching,

and illustrating his teaching by parables, questioning the multitude, and receiving questions in return, moving from place to place, gathering his audience as he went, — in short, doing as his countrymen did, and differing from them only in the superior manner of doing it.

MODE OF THE APOSTLES.

The early preaching of the Apostles was confined to a very narrow circle. They were Jews. They were preaching to Jews. The point to which everything tended was, that Jesus Christ was to stand in the place of the old Mosaic law. Their arguments were scriptural and national. We have but little evidence that they preached in any such systematic manner as has grown up in churches since their time. Already they found a system of morality, a system of public worship, and a general development of public truth. It was their business to concentrate all these elements around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, in him to establish a new centre of influence, and from him to derive a living force such as could not proceed from the dry formulas of the law.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN PREACHING.

The pulpit, as it has come down to us, has had an extraordinary history. For one reason and another it has, in many periods of time, been almost the exclusive source of knowledge among the common people. Before books were either plenty or cheap; before the era of the newspaper, the magazine, or the tract; before knowledge was poured in, as now, from a hundred quarters, — an era almost flooded with it, the people

imbibing it, so to speak, through the very pores of their skin, — the pulpit was the school, the legislative hall, the court of law; in short, the university of the common people. By change of circumstances, many elements of success in one age cease to be operative in another. Preaching will be proper or improper, wise or successful, in proportion as it adapts itself to the special want of the different peoples and the different classes of people in any one time. It may be said, in general, that the length and breadth of topics will be in inverse ratio to the civilization and refinement of the people; that is to say, the pulpit in a rude neighborhood, where the knowledge of the people will mainly be derived from it, must cover a broader ground, and must instruct the people in a hundred different things which in civilized and refined communities they learn from other sources. As refinement increases, however, the tax laid upon a minister's resources augments immeasurably. In order to maintain authority and influence, he must not be behind his own auditory. If knowledge is increasing among his people, every year will require him to develop new resources. I do not think there is any profession that demands so much of a man as that of the Christian ministry. Besides the double oration on Sunday, the prayer meeting, the conference meeting, and various other forms of neighborhood meetings, are drawing incessantly upon him. He is the root and trunk through which a thousand leaves are drawing sap.

LABORIOUSNESS OF THE MINISTRY.

The lawyer has the facts of his case made up and brought to him. He is aroused by direct antagonisms

He is striving for an end which may be gained or lost in the compass of a few hours or a few days. Everything is real, visible, near, and stimulating to him. But the Christian minister, from week to week, and through years, if his ministry be long in the same place, must discourse on themes high, recondite, and infinite in variety, and find his incitement either in the general affection which he has for his people, or in the special fascination of the truths which he preaches. His mind derives stimulation wholly from internal sources, and he gets but little help from externals. In the silence of his study, or in his solitary walks, he devises his own plans; and although his sermons are aimed at certain external conditions, at particular classes of men, or special wants, yet in the course of years it becomes difficult, week after week, to educate the same people in the same general direction, without repetition of one's self, without growing formal, or falling into dull didactics. When I consider the steady pull which the pulpit makes upon the Christian minister, I marvel not that sermons are so poor, but that they are so good; and I think that neither the pulpit nor the ministry have anything to fear from a just comparison of their results with those of any other learned profession in society.

This necessity of preparing every week fresh matter becomes, to unfruitful minds, an excessive taxation, and drives men to all manner of devices; and, even at the best, it is no small burden for a man to carry through the year his pack of sermons, born or unborn. While men are stimulated in the seminary to the higher conceptions of the duty of preaching, while newspapers

are criticising, and hungry and fastidious audiences grow more and more exacting in their demands, few there are who consider or sympathize kindly with the necessities that are laid upon young men and upon old men, to bring forth an amount of fresh and instructive matter, such as is produced in no other profession under the sun. We do not desire to have preaching made less thorough or less instructive, but it is desirable that it should be less burdensome. Many and many a minister is a prisoner all the week to his two sermons. Into them he has poured his whole life, and when they are done there is little of him left for pastoral labors and social life. Few men there are who are upborne and carried forward by their sermons. Few men ascend, as the prophet did, in a chariot of fire. The majority of preachers are consciously harnessed, and draw heavily and long at the sermon, which tugs behind them. In every way, then, it is desirable that preaching should be made more easy, that men should learn to take advantage of their own temperament, and that they should learn the best plans and methods.

PREPARATION OF THE SERMON.

And first let me speak of written and unwritten discourses. No man can speak well, the substance of whose sermons has not been prepared beforehand. Men talk of "extemporaneous preaching," but the only part that can properly be extemporaneous is the external form. Sometimes, indeed, one may be called to preach off-hand, — *ex tempore*, — and may do it with great success; but all such sermons will really be the results of previous study. The matter must be the

outgrowth of research, of experience, and of thought. Most preachers have intuitional moments, — are, so to speak, at times inspired; but such moments are not usual, and no true inspiration is based upon ignorance.

It is not, therefore, a question whether men shall depend upon the inspiration of the moment for their matter, since all who ever speak well must, in some way, have prepared for it; but whether, *having something to teach*, they shall reduce their instruction to writing, or give it forth unwritten.

ADVANTAGES AND DANGERS OF WRITTEN SERMONS.

Many considerations have been urged for and against written and unwritten sermons; and there are advantages in both kinds, and both have their disadvantages; so that a true system would seem to require sometimes one mode, and sometimes the other. My own experience teaches me that my sermons should sometimes be written, but more often unwritten.

A written sermon will be more likely to be orderly. It can contain a greater variety of material than one will be apt to carry in his memory, or to introduce with skill in an extemporaneous discourse. It may abound with finer lines of thought, employ a more skillful analysis, and deal with more subtle elements. It may be made more compact, move in straighter lines, and with cleaner execution. But, on the other hand, it is liable to be uttered with stale fervor. It is likely to be devoid of freshness, to lack naturalness, by the substitution of purely literary forms, and to be deficient in flow and power. This will be especially true of the sermons of mercurial, versatile men, whose feelings and

thoughts, endlessly changing, cannot long fit themselves to the mold of the sermon in which they have been expressed, so that, whatever may have been the inspiration of the composing hour, the delivery will be artificial. Cautious natures — men who think slowly and express themselves with a sort of fastidious conscientiousness — will find the written form of sermon adapted to their nature. The responsibility of preaching is very much alleviated, in tender and sensitive minds, by the consciousness that the sermon is all prepared, and that little or nothing is left to the contingencies of the hour of speaking.

ADVANTAGES OF UNWRITTEN DISCOURSE.

On the other hand, men of fruitfulness in thought, of ardor in feeling, courageous men, who are helped by a sense of difficulty and danger, will be roused by the necessity of exertion, and find their best powers of eloquence developed by their face-to-face dealing with an audience.

If a minister tarries long in the same place, and would carry his people over a broad field of instruction, it would be almost impossible but that he should either write his important sermons, or prepare careful briefs, which will demand scarcely less labor. Yet unwritten sermons are undoubtedly better adapted to the ten thousand varying wants of the community than are written ones. There are certain states of mind of transcendent importance in preaching, which never come to a preacher except when he stands at the focal point of his audience and feels their concentrated sympathy. No man who is tied up to written lines can, in any emergency, throw

the whole power of his manhood upon an audience. There is a freedom, a swiftness, a versatility, and a spiritual rush which comes to no man but him whose thoughts are free from trammels, and who, like the eagle, far above thicket and forest, and in the full sunlight, has the whole wide air in which to make his flight.

The essential necessity is, that every preacher should be able to *speak*, whether with or without notes. Christ "*spake*." Peter, on the day of Pentecost, did not put on his specs and read; nor did any other Apostle when called on to preach. One's message to his hearers should be so delivered as to bring his personality to bear upon them; he should be in free communion with his audience, and receive from them as well as give to them. There are a thousand shades of thought reflected from the faces of people. There are a thousand slight modifications of statement which one will make as he proceeds, after seeing and feeling the effect of what he has already said. There are points of application which cannot be imagined until he stands before his people.

A sermon should be carefully arranged, and the material thoroughly digested. But, as in a great battle elaborately planned a hundred contingencies will change the detail of its execution, or even the whole plan of it, so, in a sermon, a man should be prepared for all the emergencies which may occur. For, in every sermon, the preacher should propose to himself definite ends to be gained. A sermon is not like a Chinese fire-cracker, to be fired off for the noise which it makes. It is the hunter's gun, and at every discharge he should look to see his game fall. The power is wasted if nothing be

hit. There are a thousand situations where a written sermon would be impossible. There are multitudes in every congregation to whom the more elaborate style of the written sermon is uncongenial. A written sermon is apt to reach out to people like a gloved hand. An unwritten sermon reaches out the warm and glowing palm, bared to the touch.

At funerals, at conference meetings, and in neighborhood gatherings, where there are a thousand incidental points to which a minister is called upon to speak, nothing will answer but unwritten discourse. Who could go into a rude neighborhood of turbulent spirits and hope to gain and hold their attention by reading from a manuscript? Who can preach the gospel to the unlettered and the stupid, when the point of the pen has been substituted for the living fire? A physician would be ashamed to sit at the bedside of his patient, carrying his library of books with him. His knowledge must be such, and his use of it so facile, that he can, out of the stores of his own mind, readily adapt himself to every varying phase of want. The preacher is a physician of the soul. With thousand-fold reason should he be able, with adaptable skill, to vary to every form of disposition the resources of Divine truth.

Besides, the difference between the ease and fruitfulness of a minister trained to preach without writing, and of one who is bound to his notes, is incalculable. The task of writing two sermons a week leaves a conscientious man time and strength for but little else; whereas a man trained to think on his feet, to gather materials while he walks and talks with men, will be likely to have a far greater liberty.

POINTS TO BE GUARDED IN EXTEMPORE PREACHING.

In considering the relative merits of written and unwritten sermons, we ought not to make ourselves partisans, and select all the good points of one system and put them over against all the weak points of the other. It should be admitted that some men of a given temperament will do better by writing, although better yet might have been done by the unwritten sermon if they had, or had trained in themselves, the ability to execute it. Written sermons undoubtedly tend to repress the power of many native speakers. Most men can be trained to think upon their feet, but by disuse many lose the power God has given them. And for such, or for those who in any way miss the right education, the written sermon will be the best. The temptation to slovenliness in workmanship, to careless and inaccurate statements, to repetition, to violation of good taste, in unwritten sermons, are only arguments for a more conscientious preparation beforehand. No man can preach well, except out of an abundance of well-wrought material. Some sermons seem to start up suddenly, soul and body, but in fact they are the product of years of experience. Sermons may flash upon men who are called in great emergencies to utter testimony, and the word may grow in their hand, and, their hearts kindling, their imagination taking fire, the product may be something that shall create wonder and amazement among all that hear. It is only the form, like the occasion, that is extemporaneous. No man preaches except out of the stores that have been gathered in him. As it is possible for a written sermon to be

utterly unstudied, unscholarly, repetitious, and inane; so, on the other hand, it is possible for an unwritten sermon to be ripe, condensed, methodical, logical, swift-moving from premise to conclusion, and entirely consonant with good taste. But such sermons never proceed from raw, unthinking men; they are never born of ignorance. And let me say here, that, while nothing is more admirable than what may be called intuitions, nothing more effective than sudden outbursts of impassioned oratory, these can never be expected from mere nature. Though a man be born to genius, a natural orator and a natural reasoner, these endowments give him but the outlines of himself. The filling up demands incessant, painstaking, steady work.

Natural genius is but the soil, which, let alone, runs to weeds. If it is to bear fruit and harvests worth the reaping, no matter how good the soil is, it must be ploughed and tilled with incessant care. All must work. To some it is laborious and dull like an ox's tread; to others it is life, like the winged passage of the bird through the air; but each, in his way, must labor. The life of a successful minister may be cheerful, yea, buoyant. His work may seem the highest exercise of liberty. It may be impassioned, facile, and fruitful, remunerating him as it goes on; nevertheless, there must be incessant work. That is not alone work which brings sweat to the brow. Work may be light, unburdensome, as full of song as the merry brook that turns the miller's wheel; but no wheel is ever turned without the rush and the weight of the stream upon it.

IDEAL SERMONIZING.

It is not, then, a question between prepared and unprepared sermons. It is a question, simply, whether it is best to prepare your sermons by writing, or so to prepare them that they are held in solution in your own mind. Which is the better of these will depend largely upon your own position in society, upon the special work it is appointed you to perform, upon your own temperaments and attainments. But, considered ideally, he who preaches unwritten sermons is the true preacher; however much you may write, the tendency of all such mechanical preparation should be towards the ideal of the unwritten sermon; and throughout your early training and your after labor, you should reach out after that higher and broader form of preaching.

GENERAL VARIETY OF SERMON PLANS.

Now for the next important point. Much of the effectiveness of a discourse, as well as the ease and pleasure of delivering it, depends upon the plan. Let me earnestly caution you against the sterile, conventional, regulation plans, that are laid down in the books, and are frequently taught in the seminaries. There is no one proper plan. You are not like a bullet-mold made to run bullets of the one unvarying shape. It is quietly assumed by the teachers of formal sermonizing that a sermon is to be unfolded from the interior, or from the nature of the truth with which it deals. That this is one element, and often the chief element, that determines the form of the sermon, is true; but it also is true, that the object to be gained by preaching a

sermon at all will have as much influence in giving it proper plan as will the nature of the truth handled, — perhaps even more. Nay, if but one or the other could be adopted, that habit of working which shapes one's sermons from the necessities of the minds to which it is addressed is the more natural, the safer, and the more effective.

Consider how various are the methods by which men receive truths. Most men are feeble in logical power. So far from being benefited by an exact concatenated development of truth, they are in general utterly unable to follow it. At the second or third step they lose the clew. The greatest number of men, particularly uncultivated people, receive their truth by facts placed in juxtaposition rather than in philosophical sequence. Thus, a line of fact or a series of parables will be better adapted to most audiences than a regular unfolding of a train of thought from the germinal point to the fruitful end. The more select portion of an intelligent congregation, on the other hand, sympathize with truth delivered in its highest philosophic forms. There is a distinct pleasure to them in the evolution of an argument. They rejoice to see a structure built up, tier upon tier, and story upon story. They glow with delight as the long chain is welded, link by link. And if the preacher himself be of this mind, and if he receive the commendations of the most thoughtful and cultured of his people, it is quite natural that he should fall wholly under the influence of this style of sermonizing; so he will feed one mouth, and starve a hundred. In this way it is, and especially in large cities, that congregations are sifted by a certain process of elective

affinity. Those will come to the church who like the style of the sermon, and those will drop out who have no sympathy with it; and thus we have churches of emotion, churches of taste, and churches of philosophical theology; whereas each pulpit should give somewhat of everything.

The emotions of some men are roused through the inspiration of the intellect mainly; but there are others whose intellect, although it may be the channel through which the incitement flows, is not itself roused to its fullest activity until the feelings come to inspire it. We hear much of preaching to the understanding and of preaching to the feelings, and it is discussed which is the better way; but in some men you cannot reach the understanding until you have reached the feelings, and in others you cannot reach the feelings until you have taken possession of the understanding. A minute study of the habits of men's minds will teach the preacher how to plan his sermon so as to gain entrance.

As it is, sermons are too often cast in one mold. Week after week, month after month, year after year, when the text is announced, every child in the congregation almost, as well as the minister himself, can tell that it will be divided into "First," "Second," and "Third," together with, "Then certain practical observations." But what would be thought of one who should seek to enter every house upon a street or in a city with a single key, fitted to but one kind of lock? The minister is the "strong man," armed in a better sense than that of the parable, and it is his business to enter every house, to bind the man of sin, and to despoil

him. But every door must be entered by a key that fits that door. The minister is a universal, spiritual burglar. He enters, not to despoil good, but evil. He enters, not to take possession, but to dispossess evil. He enters, not to deprive men of their valuable effects, but to restore to them that which their Father left for their inheritance, and which has been withheld from them by the Adversary. He must seek entrance, in every case, where God has put the door. In some men there is a broad and double open door, standing in the front and inviting entrance. The familiar path in other cases is seen to wind around to the side door. There be those industrious drudges who never live out of their kitchens, and if one would find them in ordinary hours, he must e'en go around to the back door. If one lives in the cellar, he must be sought through the cellar.

It is this necessity of adaptation to the innumerable phases of human nature that reacts upon the sermon, and determines the form which it shall take. If it were possible, never have two plans alike.

It may be well, to-day, to preach an intellectual theme by an analytic process; but that is a reason why, on the following Sunday, an intellectual theme should be treated by a synthetic process. If you have preached the truth by the ways of statement and proof, you have then a reason for following it with a sermon that assumes the truth, and appeals directly to the moral consciousness. A didactic sermon is all the stronger if it follows in strong contrast with a sermon to the feelings. If you have preached to-day to the heart through the imagination, to-morrow you are to preach

to the heart through the reason; and so the sermon, like the flowers of the field, is to take on innumerable forms of blossoming. When you have finished your sermon, not a man of your congregation should be unable to tell you, distinctly, what you have done; but when you begin a sermon, no man in the congregation ought to be able to tell you what you are going to do. All these cast-iron frames, these stereotyped plans of sermons, are the devices of the Devil, and of those most mischievous devils of the pulpit, formality and stupidity.

THE NATURAL METHOD.

It is a good thing to select your text and unfold precisely its meaning and its context, and then to deduce from it certain natural lines of thought. But this is only one way. A descriptive sermon, an argumentative sermon, a poetical sermon, and a sermon of sentiment, have, severally, their own genius of form. I need not tell you that variety is, in the best sense of that term, the "natural" method. In nature, a few elements, by various permutations and combinations, produce infinite varieties, endless contrasts, and constant changes. Nature is always fresh, and never stales upon the taste.

Besides all this, every preacher will find that something is to be allowed for the way in which his own mind works. A man naturally inclined to mysticism has his whole temperament arrayed against the anatomical method of sermonizing. The man of a dry intellectual nature, who sees all things cold, clear, and colorless, cannot imitate the man whose mind lives under an arch of perpetual rainbows. So then, because the

plans of sermons must be affected both by the nature of the truth itself, by the nature of the man himself, and, above all, by the ends sought in the sermon and the nature of the people to whom the sermon is addressed, you will perceive the absurdity of attempting any one method of laying out a sermon, and the wisdom of seeking endless diversity of method as well as of subject.

SUGGESTIVE PREACHING.

A respectable source of failure is conscientious thoroughness. It is true that it is the office of the preacher to furnish thought for his hearers, but it is no less his duty to excite thought. Thus we give thought to breed thought. If, then, a preacher elaborates his theme until it is utterly exhausted, leaving nothing to the imagination and intellect of his hearers, he fails to produce that lively activity in their minds which is one of the best effects of right preaching; they are merely recipients. But under a true preaching, the pulpit and the audience should be carrying on the subject together, one in outline, and the other with subtle and rapid activity, filling it up by imagination, suggestion, and emotion. Don't make your sermons too good. That sermon, then, has been overwrought and overdone which leaves nothing for the mind of the hearer to do. A sermon in outline is often far more effective than a sermon fully thought out and delivered as a completed thing. Painters often catch the likeness of their subject when they have sketched in the picture only, and paint it out when they are finishing it; and many and many a sermon, if

it had been but sketched upon the minds of men, would have conveyed a much better idea of the truth than is produced by its elaborate painting and filling up. This is the secret of what is called "suggestive preaching," and it is also the secret of those sermons which are called "good, but heavy." There are no more thorough sermons in the English language, and none more hard to read, than those of Barrow, who was called an unfair preacher, because he left nothing for those to say that came after him. You must be careful not to surfeit people; leave room for their imagination and spirit to work. Don't treat them as sacks to be filled from a funnel. Aim to make them spiritually active, — self-helpful.

EXPOSITORY PREACHING.

Without unfolding and commenting upon the ordinary modes of sermonizing, I pass on to say that a much larger use should be made of expository preaching than has been customary in our churches. It is an admirable way of familiarizing the people with the very text of Scripture. There is an authority, which every audience recognizes, in the word of God as delivered in the Sacred Scripture, which does not belong to ordinary human teaching. Above all, the Bible is the best example in literature of the admirable mingling of fact, illustration, appeal, argument, poetry, and emotion, not in their artificial forms, but conformably to nature. The Bible is sometimes spoken of as a "revelation" in contradistinction to nature; but this is done by those who degrade nature, and regard it as something low and imperfect. I regard the Bible as the noblest book of

nature that has ever existed in life. Its very power is in that it is an exposition of nature, wider and deeper than any that philosophy has attained to; that is one reason why the Bible is found, as philosophy progressively ascertains the truths of nature, to conform to them with singular adaptation; and that is a reason, too, why the Bible becomes more and more powerful as it is better interpreted and its innermost meaning is made clear by the discoveries of men in the great field of natural science. The Bible is like a field in which is hidden gold. Men who have ploughed over and over the surface and raised perishable crops therefrom have failed to find and secure that very precious ore which is its chief value.

It will surprise one to see what wealth and diversity of topics will come up for illustration in discussion, by means of expository preaching. A thousand subtle suggestions and a thousand minute points of human experience, not large enough for the elaborate discussion of a sermon, and yet like the little screws in a watch, indispensable to the right action of the machinery of life, can be touched and turned to advantage in expository preaching. There are many topics which, from the excitement of the times and from the prejudice of the people, it would be difficult to discuss topically in the pulpit, yet, taken in the order in which they are found in Sacred Writ, they can be handled with profit, and without danger. The Bible touches all sides of human life and experience, and scriptural exposition gives endless opportunities of hitting folks who need hitting. The squire can hardly stamp out of church for a "Thus saith the Lord."

While exegetical and expository preaching have elements in them which attract and satisfy the scholar and the thinker, they, at the same time, by a strange harmony in diversity, have just that disconnectedness and variety of topic in juxtaposition which seem best suited to the wants of uncultivated minds. I know an eminent pastor in Ohio, who, probably, never in his life preached any other sermon than an expository one. The Bible in his hands, Sunday after Sunday, was his only sermon. During a long pastorate, he went through the Book from beginning to end, and often, and the fruit of his ministry justified his method. It was proverbial that no people were more thoroughly furnished with knowledge, with habits of discrimination in thought, or were more rich in spiritual feeling.

GREAT SERMONS.

There is one temptation of which I have spoken to you before, but I must be allowed to give you a special and earnest caution on the subject of "great" sermons. The themes you will handle are often of transcendent greatness. There will be times continually recurring, in which you will feel earnestly the need of great power; but the ambition of constructing great sermons is guilty and foolish in no ordinary degree. I do not believe that any man ever made a great sermon who set out to do that thing. Sermons that are truly great come of themselves. They spring from sources deeper than vanity or ambition. When the hand of the Lord is laid upon the heart, and its energies are aroused under a Divine inspiration, there may then be given forth mighty thoughts in burning words, and from the

formative power of this inward truth the outward form may be generated, perfect, as is the language of a poem. Perhaps I should have said *how* sermons, rather than *great* sermons, — sermons adapted to create surprise, admiration, and praise, sermons as full of curiosities as a peddler's pack, which the proud owners are accustomed to take in all their exchanges and travelings as their especial delight and reliance. Often they are baptized with fanciful names. There is the "Dew upon the Grass" sermon, and the "Trumpet" sermon, and the sermon of the "Fleece," and the "Dove and Eagle" sermon, and so on. Such discourses are relied upon to give men their reputation. To construct such sermons, men oftentimes labor night and day, and gather into them all the scraps, ingenuities, and glittering illustrations of a lifetime. They are the pride and the joy of the preacher's heart; but they bear the same relation to a truly great sermon as a kaleidoscope, full of glittering bits of glass, bears to the telescope, which unveils the glory of the stellar universe. These are the Nebuchadnezzar sermons, over which the vain preacher stands, saying, "Is not this great Babylon that I have builded for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" Would to God that these preachers, like Nebuchadnezzar, might go to grass for a time, if, like him, they would return sane and humble!

A sermon is a weapon of war. Not the tracery enameled upon its blade, not the jewelry that is set within its hilt, not the name that is stamped upon it, but its power in the day of battle, must be the test of its merits. No matter how unbalanced, how irregular

and rude, that is a great sermon which has power to do great things with the hearts of men. No matter how methodical, philosophic, exquisite in illustration, or faultless in style, that is a poor and weak sermon that has no power to deliver men from evil and to exalt them in goodness.

STYLE.

Style is only the outside form which thoughts take on when embodied in language. Style, then, must always conform to the nature of the man who employs it; as the saying goes, "Style is the man." In general, it may be said, that is the best style which is the least obtrusive, which lets through the truth most nearly in its absolute purity. The truths of religion, in a simple and transparent style, shine as the sunlight on the fields and mountains, revealing all things in their proper forms and natural colors; but an artificial and gorgeous style, like a cathedral window, may let in some light, yet in blotches of purple and blue that spot the audience, and produce grotesqueness and unnatural effects.

It is desirable that the preacher should have a copious vocabulary, and a facility in the selection and use of words; and to this end he should read much, giving close attention to the words and phrases used by the best authors, not for servile copying and memorizing, but that these elements may become assimilated with his own mind, as a part of it, ready for use when the need comes.

He should also have an ear for strong and terse, but rhythmical sentences, which flow without jolt

and jar. Above all other men, the preacher should avoid what may be called a literary style, as distinguished from a natural one; and by a "literary style," technically so called, I understand one in which abound these two elements,— the artificial structure of sentences, and the use of words and phrases peculiar to literature alone, and not to common life. Involved sentences, crooked, circuitous, and parenthetical, no matter how musically they may be balanced, are prejudicial to a facile understanding of the truth. Never be grandiloquent when you want to drive home a searching truth. Don't whip with a switch that has the leaves on, if you want to tingle. A good fireman will send the water through as short and straight hose as he can. No man in his senses would desire to have the stream flow through coil after coil, winding about. It loses force by length and complexity. Many a sermon has its sentences curled over it like locks of hair upon a beauty's head. I have known men whose style was magnificent when they were once thoroughly mad. Temper straightened out all the curls, and made their sentences straight as a lance. It is a foolish and unwise ambition to introduce periphrastic or purely literary terms where they can possibly be avoided. Go right ahead. Don't run round for your meaning. Long sentences may be good, but not *twisting ones.* Many otherwise good sermons are useless because they don't get on. They go round, and round, and round, and always keep coming back to the same place.

There is a charm in some styles, an unwearying freshness and sweetness, which men find it difficult to account for. I think, upon analysis, it may be found

that such styles are based upon vernacular words and home-bred idioms. At Pentecost every man heard in his own tongue wherein he was born. Use homely words, — those which people are used to, and which suggest many things to them. The words that we heard in our childhood store up in themselves sweetness and flavor that make them precious all our life long afterwards. Words borrowed from foreign languages, and words that belong especially to science and learning and literature, have very little suggestion in them to the common people. But home-bred words, when they strike the imagination, awaken ineffable and tremulous memories, obscure, subtle, and yet most powerful. Words register up in themselves the sum of man's life and experience.

The words which, from the cradle to the grave, have been the vehicles of love, trust, praise, hope, joy, anger, and hate, are not simply words, but, like paper, are what they are by virtue of the thing written on them. He who uses mainly the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, giving preference to the idioms and phrases which are homely, will have a power which cannot be derived from any other use of human language. Such language is an echo in the experience of men; and as a phrase in a mountainous country, when roundly uttered, goes on repeating itself from peak to peak, running in alternate reverberations through the whole valley, so a truth runs through all the ranges of memory in the mind of the hearer, not the less real because so extremely rapid and subtle as to defy analysis. The words themselves, full of secret suggestions and echoes, multiply the meaning in the minds of men, and make it even more in the recipient than it was in the speaker. Words are to the

thought what musical notes are to the melodies. As an instance of contrasted style, let one read the immortal allegory of John Bunyan in contrast with the grandiose essays of Dr. Johnson. Bunyan is to-day like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in season; his leaf shall not wither. Johnson, with all his glory, lies like an Egyptian king, buried and forgotten in the pyramid of his fame.

GENERAL HINTS — PROFESSIONAL MANNERS.

There are a few cautions which may be worth considering. Avoid a professional manner. There is no reason why a clergyman should be anything but an earnest Christian gentleman. I shall not quarrel with the preacher who employs a symbolic dress for some special religious reason, but no man should dress himself simply for the purpose of saying, "I am a preacher." The highest character in which a preacher can stand is that of simple Christian manhood. It is not the things in which he differs from his fellow-men by which he will gain power. It is by the things in which he will be in sympathy with them. There is great significance in that sentence, "It behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God." It is not a man's business, then, to separate himself, by dress or by manner, from the common people. It is his humanity, and his sympathy with their humanity, it is his sameness with them, both in weaknesses and in sins, in aspirations and partial attainment, that give him his power. The power of a preacher is the power of a brother among his brethren. It always seems

to me, therefore, that the putting on of a professional dress is the hiding of one's power. Walk into your pulpit as you would enter an ordinary room. Don't go there thinking of yourself, your coat, your hair, your step. Don't go there as a "man of God." Never be a puppet, — most of all, a religious puppet. I abhor the formal, stately, and solemn entrance of a man whose whole appearance seems to call upon all to see how holy he is, and how intensely he is a minister of the gospel. Nor can I avoid a feeling of displeasure akin to that which Christ felt when he condemned prayers at the street corners, when I see a man bow down himself in the pulpit to say his prayers, on first entering.

Many men sacrifice the best part of themselves for what is called the dignity of the pulpit. They are afraid to speak of common things. They are afraid to introduce home matters; things of which men think and speak, and in which, every day, a part of their lives consist, are thought not to be of enough dignity for the pulpit. And so the interests of men are sacrificed to an idol. For when the pulpit is of more importance than the joys and the sorrows, the hopes and the fears, the minute temptations and frets of daily life, it has become an idol, and, to feed its dignity, bread is taken from the mouths of the children and of the common people. There are few things that have power to make men good or bad, happy or unhappy, that it is not the duty of the pulpit to handle. This superstition of dignity has gone far to make the pulpit a mere skeleton. Men hear plenty from the pulpit about everything except the stubborn facts of their every-day life, and the real relation of these immediate things to the vast themes

of the future. There is much about the divine life, but very little about human life. There is much about the future victory, but very little about the present battles There is a great deal about divine government, but there is very little about the human governments under which men are living, and the duties which arise under those governments for every Christian man. There is a great deal about immortality and about the immortal soul, but very little about these mortal bodies, that go so far to influence the destiny of the immortal souls.

A sermon, like a probe, must follow the wound into all its intricate passages. Nothing is too minute for the surgeon or for the physician; nothing should be too common or too familiar for the preacher.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION.

Beware of an exclusive association with your kind. It is a good thing for ministers to meet together to cheer and instruct each other, but there is danger that they will fall into such exclusive professional sympathy that they will see everything from a ministerial stand-point. It would be of great value to ministers if they saw all the themes that they discuss with the eyes of common men, — of the wicked and the abandoned, of the weak and the strong, of the learned and the unlearned, of working-men, of meditative women, and of little children. On every theme which the preacher handles is turned the thought of ten thousand men in the community around him. It were worth his while to reap their harvest-fields as well as his own. But, chiefly, this universal sympathy with humanity is valuable because it produces a larger sympathy and

a more generous manhood, and reinvigorates those elements in the preacher which ally him to his kind, and from which he is to derive one great element of success.

LENGTH OF SERMONS.

One word as to the length of sermons. That never should be determined by the clock, but upon broader considerations, — short sermons for small subjects, and long sermons for large subjects. It does not require that sermons should be of any uniform length. Let one be short, and the next long, and the next intermediate. It is true that it is bad policy to fatigue men, but shortness is not the only remedy for that. The true way to shorten a sermon is to make it more interesting. The object of preaching is not to let men out of church at a given time. The length and quality of a sermon must be determined by the objects which it has in view. Now you cannot discuss great themes in a short compass, nor can you by driblets — by sermons of ten or twenty minutes — train an audience to a broad consideration of high themes. There is a medium. A minister ought to be able to hold an audience for an hour in the discussion of great themes; and the habit of ample time and ample discussion, even if occasionally it carries with it the incidental evil of weariness, will, in the long run, produce a nobler class of minds and a higher type of education than can possibly belong to the school of dwarfed sermonizers.

TRUST YOUR AUDIENCES.

Do not undervalue the capacity of the common people. Children, even, will follow discussions with interest

which seem to be far above their heads. Before I was ten years old, I remember that discussions on the subject of fore-ordination, free-will, and decrees, held me with a perfect fascination. The Bible was made for common people, and the themes that are in it are comprehensible by common people; and those sermons which cannot be understood with profit by the common people of your congregation will probably be of little profit to anybody, not even to yourself.

While there is a principle of adaptation to be observed and applied, it should be remembered that the great bulk of a minister's work does not consist in the unfolding of abstruse problems or mysteries, but the themes which he mainly handles are those which appeal to the great moral instincts and to that fundamental common sense belonging to all men. You need not fear to carry an elaborate argument down to the common people. You need not fear to address a sermon of emotion and homely application to the most cultivated audience. Let a man preach in the city as he would in the country. Let a man preach in the country as he would in the city. Preach before a cultivated audience as you would before an audience of farmers, and preach before a congregation of farmers as you would before a congregation of students. It is true that, as I have already explained, you must vary your discourses from week to week for purposes of adaptation; but the great subject-matter is common to all men.

SUMMARY.

The most effective sermonizing, then, and that which is to be aimed at in general, is the unwritten, rather than

the written; the plans must be of constant variety as adapted to the truth preached, the end to be gained, the audience to be affected, and the temperament of the preacher; the sermon should be rather suggestive than exhaustive in treatment, exposition of the Bible holding a large place in your scheme, and show-sermons utterly avoided; simplicity of style, both in language and manner, is the shortest road to success; and the earlier the preacher learns by association and sympathy with his people to interest them in him and his work, and to give them always the best that he can do, the sooner will he get upon them the hold by which he shall draw them toward God and the higher life.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. What would you suggest as to the proportion of written and unwritten sermons to be preached through one's ministry?

Mr. Beecher. — No general rule can be given. About one third written to two thirds unwritten. But be sure that you know *how to preach.*

Q. What do you think of the benefit of using books of sermon-plans?

Mr. Beecher. — They will help you when you know how to use them; that is, when you don't need them. Before that time don't smother yourself with them.

Q. What do you think of the propriety or advisability of what is called sensational preaching?

Mr. Beecher. — I am for it, or against it, according to what you mean by it. If it aims at a low, temporary success by mere trickery, I don't believe in it; but if you

mean preaching which produces a *sensation*, I do. The legitimate use of real truth is all right, no matter how much people get stirred up; the more the better. In this matter you will not err if you are *up to par in manliness*, neither above it nor below.

X.

LOVE, THE CENTRAL ELEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

I KNOW of no single passage of Scripture that gives, with so much detail, the Apostle's idea of the ends and instrumentalities of the Christian minister, as that contained in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, a few verses of which I will read to you, because there is one sentence there that will contain the thought of to-day. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and

compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

I purpose, this afternoon, to speak to you on the love-principle as the central power in the work of a Christian minister. "Speaking the truth in love" is the expression, and it is still stronger in the original than in our version, because we have no word signifying "to truth." We say "to speak the truth." Literally, it is *truthing it in love.* No one, it seems to me, can have read attentively the teachings of the Apostle, and entered into the spirit in which he worked, without having seen under all his feelings and experiences the influence of this immense love-principle. In him it took on a more enthusiastic form than it did in the Saviour. It was, as one might say, more a novelty with him. It was the eternal state of the Saviour, widely diffused and developed, and like a native atmosphere, such as envelops the whole earth. In the Apostle it seems more like an intense or concentrated inspiration. It was news to him, indeed, and good news. It inspired evidently and vividly every part of his life.

WHAT IS LOVE?

I think it is extremely difficult to give any definition of it. We may point to some men and say they come nearer to it, as exemplars, than others. It is not so much a faculty, or power, as it is a certain condition of the whole spirit, made up of the contribution of several different elements of the mind, having relations to

things superior and to things inferior. It is the religious principle, which, when you have it as the ground and root of your ministry, includes, primarily, love to God. And by the term "God" we understand whatever is conceived of as superhuman in excellence and in wisdom. God is infinite. No man can crystallize God. If he does, his God becomes an idol not bigger than the man. God is infinite and formless. When he is really thought of, it is by the contribution of some of the highest and best of human qualities, out of which and over which something flames up before the imagination that is higher than the reach of human experience. The germ may have been derived from observation or experience, but we recompose these nobler attributes of the soul, clothe them with form, and call that God, — knowing all the time that we cannot measure him, but that this process of thought and feeling reveals and inspires in us some sense of that quality which we mean when we speak of the Divine attributes. But the true sense of God does not stop there. It includes the feeling of love towards this Divine being which is spoken of in the New Testament, and the most glorious choral and symphony of which lies in the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians. Such a love embraces all that is human, — all creatures who have the power of being happy or miserable, and it has a yearning sympathy and desire for their good. It includes, also, a nearness, a sweetness, and a desire towards men, not so much that they should love us, for that is confined more nearly to the reciprocating passions of men, — friendship, for instance, which is a specialty under this generic head, and is a

part of it, though essentially it involves an element of self. But the charity, or love, of the New Testament is the going out of thought, of feeling, and of sympathy towards others, and towards whatever can receive benefit from us. It is the state of the Creator, and I suppose that it is the state of those most like him, who dwell close to him. It is the wish that whatever we are thinking of, or saying, or doing, may make some one better and happier. It is genial. It ought to be full of cheer, courage, hope, and it is full of bounty and blessings. It means happiness, and as happiness is greater in proportion as it rises from the lower range of susceptibilities to the higher moral qualities, those who desire to confer happiness intelligently will do so by making men capable of being happy, that is, by enriching and developing their higher nature.

LOVE, THE CENTRAL POWER OF THE MINISTRY.

You will find all the way through the letters of the Apostle Paul how much he relied upon the inspiration of love, how much it was the working power of his ministry. It seems to me that this is the distinctive quality that ought to belong to every Christian minister. It is the underlying force by which all his special faculties should be inspired. Where this exists in great power, it will give a peculiar color and quality to every attribute of the mind. Even the most formal acts of reasoning will have a certain glow imparted to them. The sharpest discriminations made by conscience, the requisitions of the most fastidious taste, the impulses of fear, the stress of indignation and of anger itself, will all receive a tone and quality from

love which will make them doubly powerful and doubly beneficent. I do not believe that any other temper than that of love will carry a minister through his whole work with so little wear and tear, with so much inward satisfaction. Indeed, it is the element by which he interprets at once God and man. It is only when we put ourselves, according to the measure of our power, into the same relations towards man that God sustains, that we are susceptible of intuitions of Divine mercy and pity, or can form any conception of how the amazing power of God may act beneficently, through the atmosphere of Divine love, towards things mean, selfish, and hateful. There is only one pass-key that will open every door, and that is the golden key of love. You can touch every side of the human heart and its every want, that is, if you can touch it at all; and if you have the power to bestow anything, love gives facility of access, the power of drawing near to men, the power of enriching thought, of weakening their hungry desires and appetites, the power to thaw out the winter of their souls and to prepare the soil for the seed and growth of the better life.

A minister who has pure intellection only to offer to his people is like one who would in winter drag a plow over the frozen ground. He marks it, but he does not furrow it. He who has to make the seed of truth grow in living men into living forms must have power to bring summer to men's hearts, — light and heat; and then culture, whether it be by the plow or the harrow, by the hoe or the spade, will do some good. It is this summer-power of love, first, middle, and last, that every teacher and Christian preacher ought to seek.

It is this that you ought to seek in the closet, in meditation, and in intercourse one with another. You must have a heart so alive and full of genial, sympathizing love that you feel yourself related to everything on the globe that lives and has the power of enjoyment. How this noble conception has been felt by the old ministers of New England! No man can read the writings of Jonathan Edwards, of Hopkins, and others of that school, without seeing how they were filled with this sense of doing for others, and the desire to confer blessings upon universal sentient being. Their system was, in many respects, very imperfect, but, after all, the ideal was in their mind. They had a true conception of the all-pervading power of love in the hearts of men, which ought to be the very center, out of which the whole ministry is to grow.

LOVE, NOT MERE GOOD-NATURE.

A great many persons, when you say such things as these, feel, at once, "That is my doctrine. I do not believe in these always dry, metaphysical men, arguing and arguing and arguing." Another man says, "That is my idea about it. I do not like these men who are always combative. I like a mild, meek, and lowly man."

But I do not mean any such thing as that. I do not mean these lazy, sunshiny, good-natured men, who have no particular opinions, and who would about as soon have things go one way as another; who are without sharp and discriminating thought, have no preferences, no indignation, no conscience, no fire. I do not believe in any such men. I like to see a man who has

got *snap* in every part of him, who knows how to think and to speak, and to put on the screw, if that is his particular mode of working.

This sweet and beneficent heart-quality that I am speaking of is the atmosphere in which every other faculty works, and which is generic to them all. It is Christian sympathy, benevolence, and love. Do you not suppose that love has anger? There is no such anger as that which a mother's love furnishes. Do you suppose that when she sees the child that is both herself and him whom she loves better than herself, the child in whom her hope is bound up, the child that is God's glass through which she sees immortality, the child that is more to her than her own life, doing a detestable meanness, that she is not angry and indignant, and that the child does not feel the smart of physical advice? Do you not suppose that the child knows what anger is? I tell you there is no such indignation possible as the indignation that means rescue, help, hope, and betterment. You might as well say that a summer shower has no thunder as to say that love has no anger. It is full of it, or may be. Has love no specialty or discrimination in removing error, nor any continuing, intense regard for specific and exact truth? God has it, and we are like him. We are his children, and know it by that. Love is simply that which overhangs all these powers, which gives them quality and direction, and gives to us a larger power through these lower instruments.

And so a man who is purely intellectual, without any special sympathy or love, cannot deal rightly in moral truth. He may in physical truth, because that is not

at all a question of influence; but all moral truth — and with that you have mainly to deal — is truth that springs out of experience. Unless you have love, you cannot go right by pure intellect; while the intellect working in an atmosphere of love can rarely go wrong in moral things.

You cannot long go right where it is the sense of beauty alone that you are appealing to. He who preaches mainly to taste and the sense of the beautiful, he who sees God especially in forms and colors and sounds, and all the sweet elements of grace in the world, has one portion of the truth, but he is apt to run out, through feebleness, into sentimentality. He lacks that strength, that power, and that continuity which come from the real Divine love-temperament.

LOVE OF THE WORK.

Now it is to the use of this principle in a few directions that I shall ask your attention this afternoon. First, for your own souls' sake, you cannot afford to be ministers if your work is not love-work, if it is a burden to you, if your parishes are to you what a bound boy is to the farmer, — a nuisance, rather than a help, and, on general principles of humanity, to be got along with in the best way possible. If you are carrying your work in that way, you have no business where you are. He who takes the wants of a community into his keeping, he who undertakes to teach the young, to comfort the old in the midst of their earthly sorrows, and to solve all those endless problems that are coming up day by day, must love his work and his people, and be conscious that his heart goes out to them and

yearns for them, as, in the last days of winter, we yearn to hear the singing of the birds, and watch for the trees to put forth their odorous buds, and spread their fragrance through the air. How we do long for spring and summer, and for their sweetness! The preacher ought to stand to his work all the time longing for the development of men as we do for flowers, and as the vintner does for the time of the grape. When you have this love, how patient it will make you, and how easy it will make the hard tasks of your ministry! How full of suggestion it will be! How it will bring sermons out of people, and how it will multiply the occasions of bounty! What a discernment of clear interpretation there is through the medium of sympathy and benevolence, and how it carries its own reward with it!

Some men work from a sense of duty, — and better that than nothing; others work from various motives; but the best motive of all is love of the work. Having that, you cannot help working. Why do birds sing? Because the song is in them, and if they did not let it forth they would split; it must come out. It is the spontaneity and the urgency of this feeling in them that impels their utterance. Why should men work, or visit, or preach? Because their hearts want some outlet, some vent, to give expression to the feeling of earnest sympathy that is in them. Where a man has this strong and large benevolence, he will always be busy, and pleasantly busy.

THE HEALTHFULNESS OF BENEVOLENCE.

And more than that, let me tell you, there is nothing that enables a man to last so long as the qualities which

naturally are trained into this spirit of true, sympathetic beneficence. All the acerb feelings grind the enamel off. All men who work under a sense of responsibility, men who hear the crack of Conscience's whip all the time, and all those who are inspired by the Protean forms of fear, easily wear out. The kindly feelings of man's nature have nourishment in them. They are not stimulants alone. They carry nutriment, and a man who is working good-naturedly, with the sweetness of hope and with the facility of courage all the time, can work weeks and months without breaking down ; nay, he grows fat on work. I hold that there is nothing so wholesome or so medicinal as brain-work, rightly directed. While a man may exhaust his nervous system by excessive brain-work, a moderate and reasonable practice of it is beneficial. You all know that ministers are the longest livers. I do not mention that to prove that they are the greatest brain-workers ; but a man who works under a high form of positive benevolence, which brings cheer and hope, can work longer and with less fatigue, and he can continue under intense excitement longer and with less wear and tear, than under any other stimulus.

I have often been asked by what secret I retain health and vigor under labors multiform and continuous. I owe much to a good constitution inherited from my parents, not spoiled by youthful excesses or weakened by over-study ; much also to an early acquired knowledge of how to take care of myself, to secure invariably a full measure of sleep, to regard food as an engineer does fuel (to be employed economically, and entirely with reference to the work to be done by the

machine); much to the habit of economizing social forces, and not wasting in needless conversation and pleasurable hilarities the spirit that would carry me through many days of necessary work; but, above all, to the possession of a hopeful disposition and natural courage, to sympathy with men, and to an unfailing trust in God; so that I have always worked for the love of working. I have cast out the grinding sense of responsibility as uncongenial to the faith and trust which belong to a Christian life. I have studiously refused to entertain anxieties. I have put in all the forces which I possessed, as a farmer puts in his labor and his seed; and I have left the germination, and the weather, and the future harvest, to the providence of God. In general, I have never performed my work but once; whereas many others perform theirs three times, — first, by anticipation; then, in realization; and afterwards, by rumination. In general, however, it may be said that a hopeful, trusting, and loving disposition carries health, and restores men from fatigue, more rapidly than any other. The acerb feelings are corrosive. The saccharine emotions are nourishing and enduring.

LOVE, A POWER-GIVING ELEMENT.

But there are other things. No one can deal with the hearts of men as he ought, unless he has the sympathy which is given by love. I have always been struck with the Apostle's notion as to quality and quantity of feeling. If he charges you to be hopeful, it is to be *very* hopeful. It is not enough for you to be right. You must be very largely right; each par-

ticular good must be carried up to its ideal form. Thus, we are not only to be fruitful, but we must *abound* in fruitfulness, as a vine, bearing so much that clusters have to be cut away to make room for those that remain. We do not know what Christian qualities are until we see them in their larger forms. Suppose we knew nothing about apples except as we had seen them grown in Siberia, what could we say about pound pippins? Suppose you only see those poor, mean, and barren qualities that often are called Christian experiences, what would you know about the depths, the beauty, the freshness, and the power that are in a true man, who is built after the model of Jesus Christ, who is conscious of his strength, who is free, who is profuse, generous, and abundant? God is in him; and men see God more nearly than they can by their own meditation, when they see a man like that. You may have benevolence as a pale stream of moonbeams shining into your study window, and you may sit and write your thin sermons in the light of that pale, speculative benevolence, but it will not do.

When our Master was approaching the last part of his life, when the cloud threatening the future was already over him, when he stood near to the grave, he said to his disciples, in that moment of preternatural anguish, "Peace I leave with you,— my peace I give unto you." It always filled me with admiration that Christ not only had peace for himself, but enough to share with his disciples,— "My peace I give unto you." Brethren, every quality that goes to make manhood you must have in excess, as the brooks have their treasures, making haste to empty themselves, to give room for that

which is coming on behind. You must have enough benevolence, not only for yourselves, but for your congregation also, to pervade and to fill them. This is what you ought to live for, and this is what is meant by living a godly life, producing not ideas alone, not arguments only, but living, loving manhood,— doctrine in living forms. It is what men ought to seek for in their closet and in their daily conversation.

I feel provoked when I see how young Christians often try to build themselves up into a Christian life by social meetings, so called. They get into an uncomfortable room; they sit stiff and dumb. Some one opens a Bible, and reads a chapter; then somebody turns around, kneels down, and makes a prayer; then another chapter, and then they sing. They all have an awful responsibility, and all wish they felt something. They get up, look solemn, and go out. They move off regularly, methodically, and mechanically to their several businesses; and that is trying to grow in grace! You might just as well expect to make a shady forest in your garden with the beanpoles you had cut and set out in the spring, as to make a Christian man by such a course as that. It lacks juice, and its juice lacks sugar. There is no grace, there is no reality to it. There is nothing in it that God loves, and certainly you do not like it. When the power of the Holy Ghost comes down upon men, they grow up into such experiences as those which ring so grandly through the cathedral of the Bible. You are called to liberty, to a larger life. You are called to more manliness, to love, to fervor, to joy!

What you need, to make your ministry successful in

dealing with men, is that wonderful power which a true large, and fruitful benevolence gives. Here is a little penurious whipster of a man, — as it were, made up of that which was left, a mere biscuit after the loaf. You hear the neighbors say he is "the smallest specimen of a man in this neighborhood." But if you, a minister of Christ's gospel, look upon him, there is that in him which ought to make your heart yearn and swell towards him. Christ died for him, and eternity has registered his name. Simple as he is, poor as he is, thin as he is, unsatisfactory as he is, though he were but a sand-bank among rich soils, it is for you to find a way of culture that shall bring forth some beauty out of the very barrenness of his nature. Your heart should sympathize with him in such a way that you can say, "I will add to him what he lacks ; I will shine into him and warm him, I will brood over him and will help him. I will do it myself." Lay down your life for him. Give him something of your life.

Then, again, there is a suspicious man, who is always seeing people's faults. He rejoices in iniquity, and carries it as a peddler does his pack. He likes to sit down in the corners and retail it. Nothing is so spicy to him. He smacks his lips over it. He comes to you and says, "You have heard about the old deacon up there," and so on. He goes around the village. He is a turkey-buzzard among men, picking up carrion and feeding on it. Everybody despises him and hates him, — except the man who loves. *He* feels like a physician going into a hospital and finding a patient there who is a mass of disease. If he were searching for a painter's model, he would not look at such a man. But, going

there as a healer, he will try what he can do to relieve the sick man. You can manage these morally diseased men if you only love them. It is your business to strike such warmth into a bad man as to make him believe that you are working for his good. You must make him "cotton" to you and be glad to see you, so that he will lay aside his deviltry when you go near him. Probably he will not believe in you at first, and may suspect there is some deceit in it all. He will watch you, and will "summer and winter" you. But, follow him up, and by and by there will be a chance when there can be no mistake as to your motives.

I had a man in my parish in Indiana, who was a very ugly fellow. He had a wife and daughter who were awakened during the revival which was then working, and, while visiting others who needed instruction, I went to see and talk with them. He heard that I had been in his house, and shortly afterwards I passed down the street in which he lived. He was sitting on the fence; and of all the filth that was ever emptied on a young minister's head, I received my share. He threw it out, right and left, up and down, and said everything that was calculated to harrow my pride. I was very wholesomely indignant for a young man. I said to myself, "Look here, I will be revenged on you yet." He told me I should never darken his door again, to which I responded that I never would until I had his invitation to do so. Things went on for some time. I met him on the street, bowed to him, spoke well of him, and never repeated his treatment of me to any one. We constantly crossed each other's paths, and often visited the same people. I always spoke kindly of him.

Very soon he ran for the office of sheriff, and then I went out into the field and worked for him. I canvassed for votes; I used my personal influence. It was a pretty close election, but he was elected. When he knew I was working for him, I never saw a man so utterly perplexed as he was. He did not know what to make of it. He came to me one day, awkward and stumbling, and undertook to "make up," as the saying is. He said he would be very glad to have me call and see him. I congratulated him on his election, and of course accepted his overtures; and from that time forth I never had a faster friend in the world than he was. Now I might have thrown stones at him from the topmost cliffs of Mount Sinai, and hit him every time, but that would not have done him any good. Kindness killed him. I won his confidence.

THE SUSTAINING POWER OF LOVE.

Now, your congregation will be full of sluggish people. Somebody must bear with those dull and stupid ones. You will find, what is a great deal worse, people who know everything, and yet know nothing, You cannot teach them anything. They are conceited snips of men, who are rushing up to you, and taking on airs in your presence, and you feel like smacking them, as you would a black fly or a mosquito. But somebody has to bear with them. If Christ died for the world, he died for a great many ordinary folks; and if we are Christ's we must do the same thing. I defy you to do this on a plan, or a purpose, or "on speculation," if I might say so. You have to do it because there is that in your heart which makes you

brother to such men. You have to say, "He is worth bearing with. I would better suffer in his place than let him suffer. He must be enlarged. He must be augmented, and made more a man in Christ Jesus."

Then, again, you have obstinate men whom you cannot start, men who are unreasonable. There is nothing in the long run that can withstand a wise tenderness, a gentle benevolence, and a sympathy that melts the heart by a genial fervor, and which is continued in season and out of season, in sickness and in health, year in and year out. Nothing can withstand that. How is the soil disintegrated? First, the ground is broken down by the grinding of the frost, then come the warmth of spring, the mellow rains, and then the after-sunshine. In such ways must a minister work, — first by attrition, and then by the geniality of his own soul. You can make soil out of almost anything, if you will only give your time to it.*

LOVE, THE KEY-NOTE OF PULPIT-WORK.

There are, also, some specialties in this true Christian love and sympathy that bear upon the pulpit. In the first place, the whole cast of your thought and the subjects with which you deal are to bear the impress of

* "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children." — 1 Thess. ii. 7 – 11.

this good news, — that God is Love, and that God so loved the world that he gave his son to die for it; and that Christ so loves the world, that, having died for it, he now sits at the right hand of God, a risen Saviour, to live for it.

If you preach justice alone, you will murder the gospel. If you preach conscientiously, as it is called; if you sympathize with law and with righteousness as interpreted by the narrow rule of a straight line; if you preach, especially, with a sense of vindictive retribution, — I do not care who the criminals are, — you will fail of your whole duty. There must be justice, and punitive justice, of course; but, after all, "Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord. It is a quality so dangerous to handle that only Infinite Love is safe in administering it. No mortal man should dare to touch it, for it is a terrible instrument. You are to administer all the great truths, the most rugged truths, in the spirit of the truest sympathy, benevolence, and love.

LOVE MAKES A FREE PREACHER.

When you kindle to a full sympathy with God and man, you can preach anything you please. You can say anything you please; if it goes with a reasonable degree of wisdom and a great degree of sympathetic love, it will be warmly received. Recollect the Apostle's manner. When he wanted to rebuke the Ephesian Church, he bethought him of all the good things he could, for encouragement. "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee," adds he; and then he brought in his rebuke, having prepared the way for it.

Some ministers seem to feel that men are totally depraved, and that it is the duty of every preacher to secure the evidence of it by stirring men up to bitterness and resistance. Your business is to tone that down, and to prepare men's hearts by skillful address that shall put to sleep these repellent forces in them, so that they will hear your message and accept your influence upon the nobler side of their minds. When you are like a wise teacher or an affectionate parent, and prepare your congregation for what you wish, you can say almost anything to them.

Young gentlemen, the great art of managing a congregation lies in this, — I am supposing now that a man has a good substance of thought and common sense, and I am speaking of the qualifications that reside in the heart alone, — be good-natured yourself, and keep them good-natured, and then they will not need any managing. It is the most difficult thing in the world to control a great audience, when they are irritable and fault-finding and peevish; and they will be apt to be so, if the minister's own gifts lie in that direction, and his service is irritating and arrogant. On the other hand, if the ministration of the pulpit is a balm to them, not by keeping down their moral sensibilities, but by keeping the sweeter and nobler part of their nature uppermost, you can reprove and rebuke, with all long-suffering, and they will accept it at your hands.

It is out of this spirit, too, that you can deal with topics that otherwise would not be allowed. Ministers often think they cannot preach what they feel they ought to preach. There is a reformation going on, and it will affect vested interests, and there are men in the

congregation, involved in these matters, on whom one's influence very largely depends, and it would be dangerous to irritate them. One man is a factory-owner, and the whole church turns on that pivot; and yet it becomes necessary to preach on the duties of employers to laboring men, and their sympathies with workingmen. Capital is largely represented, and it is suspicious and watchful. Now, you cannot afford to let this topic alone; and you have sold yourself to any man fear of whom makes you silent. Yet you can discuss any topic if you only love men enough; your heart will tell you how to approach it. In a neighborhood you can preach stringent temperance, though there are many in your church who are interested in the prevalence of drinking-usages. Slavery can be preached against, and so it could in the olden times. Of course there are some who will take offence, but, in the main, you will hold your own and save others. It is to be done by being perfectly sweet-tempered and perfectly fearless. A congregation knows when a minister is afraid of them just as well as a horse knows that his driver is afraid of him.

If you want to stay in a place, be willing to leave it. He that would save his life must be willing to lose it, and he that will lose his life shall save it. If you are willing to go out of any parish just as soon as they want you to go, and are perfectly willing to lay down your work to-morrow if they say so, they will know it. If you want to stay very much, they will know that too, and will take advantage of it. Stand fearless, speaking the truth in love, — and in a good deal of love, — in love multiplied just in proportion as the theme

is critical and dangerous. Be willing to take the responsibility of saying it, when they attack you out of the pulpit, bearing in mind that your business is to take care not only of yourself, but of all men. If one of your parishioners behaves badly, you must tax yourself with his bad behavior, and say it is partly your fault, and not altogether his. If you take the stand indicated by such instances as I have alluded to, there is no reason why your pastorate should not be long, and there is no reason why you may not preach upon any subject you choose.

I recollect one thing, which I may have told you before, but if I have, you will have a chance, as I have heard Gough say, to see whether I am capable of telling the same thing twice alike. It is in reference to what Calvin Fletcher, a wise old lawyer in Indianapolis, said to me on one occasion, and which has been a help to me all my life since. He said, "If I do business with any man and he gets angry at me, or does not act right, it is my fault. My business is to see that everybody with whom I do business shall do right; I charge myself with that responsibility." Now you must charge yourselves, in the same way, with the responsibility of your parish. If, after the lapse of some considerable time, people get angry and act wrongly, it is in part your fault, and not theirs alone. If people want to hear the truth with freshness and new life, do not go clucking around the country, and say, "I was ousted from my nest, where I was brooding, because the people have itching ears and want novelties." If people are discontented with you, they have a right to be so.

In closing, then, I urge you to see that you are com-

petent for all things, by study, by the weight of your thought, and by the skill of your administration of the truth to men; but, above all, and beyond all, have in you the propelling power of that genial, yearning love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things." For "whether there be prophecies" — doctrines, teachings — "they shall fail; whether there be knowledge" — such partial and incomplete systems of thought as men work out — "it shall vanish away." There is but one thing that stands. "LOVE NEVER FAILETH."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Would you have us preach on the subject of the heart being "desperately wicked"?

MR. BEECHER. — O yes. There are some texts in the Bible that I think it would be difficult to preach from, but that is not one of them. On the contrary, only last Sunday morning I preached on a branch of that theme, namely, the "deceitfulness of riches." I showed what deceit men practiced on themselves in proposing to themselves to get rich, in trying to get rich, and then in taking care of the riches when acquired. I did not notice that any of my rich men took it to themselves, either.

Q. Would you preach "He that believeth not shall be damned"?

MR. BEECHER. — Would I?

STUDENT. — Yes, sir.

MR. BEECHER. — Yes, sir, assuredly. I always preach with a shadow. There is always an alternative. But I do not need, you know, to have a whip right up over

the kitchen fireplace, where the boy can see it all the time. If you have given him one good whipping, he will remember it, and then, when you say "John!" that is enough. There are a dozen whippings in that.

These questions that you are propounding all come on the supposition that to preach in a spirit of love means that there is to be no punishment. It does not mean any such thing. The spirit of love carries everything with it. It carries punishment with it, but in a qualified form, even as love carries it; though not as fear does, nor as conscience does, nor as pure intellect does.

Q. Where is the spring from which a man is to obtain the love and sympathy you speak of?

Mr. Beecher. — If a man knows what he wants and what he is aiming at in his every-day life, he must get it just as he would seek any other educational development. If you desire a musical education, what do you do? You practice for that. If you wish to attain knowledge of Art, what do you do? You put yourself under a master, and work for form and color. If you want devotion in the sense of rapt meditation, then you seek that. If you want it in the sense of exhilaration and of bounding joyousness, you will seek that. But if you want religion in a sense of genial sympathy with men, you will seek it by being with men. And when you can bring yourself to lay aside things that you very much wish to do, things that are naturally strong in you, for the sake of doing something that you do not want to do, or being something that you do not want to be, on account of other persons, who are neither very agreeable nor very re-

warding, and who, perhaps, will never know of your sacrifice, then you will have shown yourself fit for your work, and can say, "I lay down a part of my life for that man." That is the way we must minister to our congregations. Christ says, "I am the way." Make a road for men's feet upon yourself. Pave it with your most precious things. Do it a few times, and I do not think you will have to ask me any other questions as to the way to cultivate that spirit. Practice loving men if you want to have the power of love.

Q. Do you think that a man who is by nature very cold and unsympathetic should preach, or go into the ministry?

Mr. Beecher. — No; you might as well take an icicle to warm an invalid's bed with.

Q. Was not Jonathan Edwards, when preaching the justice of God, moved by love?

Great as Edwards truly was, and far in advance of his age in many respects, he yet was unconsciously under the grossly materializing theological habits of the mediæval schools. The monarchial figures of government in the Bible, and the figures of material punishment, are full terrible enough. But to employ the imagination, as Edwards did, in inventing new horrors for hell, above all, in attempting to picture the Divine Heart as so in love with justice that it rejoices in the merited sufferings of the wicked, was a sad perversion of the functions of imagination. In some respects Edward's terrific sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," may be ranked with Dante's *Inferno* or Michael Angelo's painting of the "General Judgment."

But who can look upon the detestable representations of the painter, or the hideous scenes of the Florentine poet, without a shudder of wonder that they should have ever come from such tender and noble hearts? They were dreams of dark days. The doom of wickedness is dreadful enough, without the hideous materialism and the horrible buffoonery of justice which prevailed in a former day.

Q. Is there not something analogous to Divine judgment in the punishment of criminals by capital and other punishment?

Punishments follow the violations of natural law. But Nature is blind. It makes no discriminations. It takes no account of motives. It has no palliations and no pity.

When a father punishes, he takes account of the age, inexperience, temptations, and motives of the child, and grades his penalties, or wholly pardons, as will best effect his end, the child's good. Governments undertake to do the same. But magistrates are hampered. Their knowledge is imperfect. The law fixes arbitrary processes of procedure. Punishments are often too lenient or too severe. They are determined full as much by the weakness of government as by the desert of the victim. Governments are but clumsy machines, and public justice is but a poor imitation of Divine justice. We should be cautious in employing the analogies derived from material laws, or from human civil governments, in interpreting the method of One who knows perfectly all things, who is unlimited in power, and who is not impelled by sheer weakness to such expedients as are resorted to by human tribunals.

I think that the analogies of parental government, in a human household, in which penalties are administered in the spirit of love, and for the child's good, are far nearer the truth than those derived from the example of civil governments or artificial tribunals.

LECTURES ON PREACHING.

SECOND SERIES.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS MACHINERY OF THE CHURCH.

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Lectures on Preaching.

I.

CHOOSING THE FIELD.

In returning, young gentlemen, after a year's absence, it would hardly be possible that I should not, in some parts of the several lectures which I shall give, have occasion to touch again many of the topics which came up incidentally during the first course of lectures. And yet it will be my effort to pass over an entirely different field. And, without rigidly restricting myself to it, I propose to consider the auxiliary influences which are requisite to the preacher's life; those institutions and various instruments in the church and out of the church by which he will prepare himself as a preacher, or reap and secure the fruit of his preaching.

I purpose in this introductory lecture to consider the influence upon a man's preaching of his primary choice of a place. That will involve more than seems upon the mere statement.

I apprehend that when the mind is called to the choice of a profession, it acts usually under influences

that are more sentimental — more, in the proper sense of that term, romantic — more purely spiritual, than when it comes afterwards to act upon the choice of a place in which to exercise the profession. A man perhaps considers the various avenues of life, asks himself into which of them he shall throw his life-forces. A great variety of influences act upon him; but if he is in the early stage of religious enthusiasm, or if he has been bred in a household where all the anticipations of father and mother have pointed in one way, then, when he determines to be a minister, it is oftentimes the mere ratification of a sort of vague and general expectation. Or, if he be late brought into the kingdom of spiritual realities, there is a glow and an enthusiasm upon him, under which he determines to become a preacher of the gospel of Christ.

Now, one of the incidental evils that unfortunately attend a laborious preparation for the ministerial work is the toning down of that generous and enthusiastic religious feeling; so that when one has studied assiduously for two or three years, though he may know a great deal more, and in some respects his Christian character may have rounded out and become more symmetrical, he is very apt to have more consideration of secular things. He thinks more of things as they *are*, and gains or loses by the process, according to the mode in which it is carried out. For when a man asks himself, now near the end of his course of study, "What shall I do? Where shall I go? Where shall I settle?" there begin to arise a multitude of considerations which did not at all affect his mind when he chose the profession of preaching; and considera-

tions, too, which, while they are not formally objectionable, often do very great mischief.

THE FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE.

The presumption, I think, in every case, — it will have its exceptions, but ordinarily the presumption in the case of every young man about entering the field for preaching is that he should go *where preaching is needed most*, and not where he himself will be best off. He who follows the example of Christ and the Apostles most nearly, — not in the letter but in the substance, in the spirit, — surely cannot be far from right. If there be any example which is ascertained, it is that "He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich." If there was any one point that Paul emphasized, it was that he would not boast of what had been done by the Spirit of God through other men's labors, — how the gospel had been preached around through extensive regions, — but would glory in that which he himself had been permitted to do, laying his own foundations, and not building on those of other men. He gloried in going where none had been before him, where the world was new, where the hardships were apparent, where other men perhaps would shrink from bearing the burdens that he had the power and the spirit to bear. And he who goes where men need him most, follows closely the example and the spirit of his Master. That is the spirit of the gospel of Christ: to take care first of those that most need care, and to do the most for them that lack the most; to care, not for those that are already well helped, but for those that are despised and ready to perish.

PARISH OR MISSION.

So that the presumption is, if the spirit of the Master is to be the guide, that men should go either into fields at home that are low down and require hard work, or into the remoter regions that may be called mission-fields. And the question may be summed up in these two words: Will you choose a *parish*, or a *mission?* And when I say "mission," I do not mean a foreign mission, necessarily. Will you take work that is fresh to your hand, where you will have to be creative, or will you take that which requires simple superintendence and already has its course, which you have to supervise merely, as an engineer runs an engine already built?

IDEAS *versus* FOLKS.

A great many considerations would incline one to go into the mission-field. But, after all, there are, I think, nine men who go to parishes where there is one that goes to a new and open field. For when a man has finished his studies he is full of ideas, — full of new ideas. "Well, ought he not to be?" Yes; but he loves his ideas. "Well, ought he not to love his ideas?" Yes, but he loves ideas more than he does folks; — and that is heresy, — flat! He has got a system, and he wants to try it. He has got some sermons, — he wants to see how they will fly! He goes out with the feeling of the theologian; but the feeling that should send every man into the field to work, is sympathy with man. That is the whole of the gospel, in a word. Divine purity, divine knowledge, divine power, have a compassion for imperfect, sinful, lost,

wretched men; and he is the true minister who has that compassionate sympathy, and subordinates everything else as the instrument of it. But when young men first come out of the seminary, they are very apt to be more in sympathy with ideas than with people, and so they want to go where their ideas will have a free course. "What could I do with all my sermons, if I were to go out into the backwoods where they won't let me *read* a sermon? What could I do with all my arguments, my statements, my nicely put questions and answers, among a people absolutely uncultivated?"

PLEAS FOR SOFT PLACES.

And next comes in this thought, which is the thought of ambition: "I have taken three years to prepare myself for college, and have worked hard; I have been four years in college, — that is seven; and three years in the theological school, — that makes ten years that I have spent. I have improved my time; and now am I going to bestow myself upon a field that is not big enough to hold the half of me? Is it duty? Ought not a man to put himself in a field where all his powers and all his stores of knowledge will have an opportunity of being developed? And why should he tuck himself away in a corner? Why should he go into a field where there will be but one part in ten that he can make any use of?" And so the man deceives himself under the plea of conscience, — that he is bound to bestow his goods in a larger barn than he would get if he went into a poor and needy place.

Then comes in also very seductively the vanity of friends, which so easily finds a nest in our own vanity

wherein to lay its eggs. "Father has been poor, and he has 'scrimped' himself and the whole family to get me through my course." And the father himself feels it. He says, "I have sacrificed everything for this boy, and he has had a hard time. He has lived close to the bone; now he has got through. Every one says he is one of the most promising young men that ever went from this county; he has seen hard times enough. It is time he should have an easier place. He has felt so much of poverty, he would better go up to such or such a church, where he can have a good salary." They want to take a turn and find a larger place, where the boy can do good and enjoy himself. If, on the other hand, the father be rich, he says, "But my son has been brought up as a gentleman's son, and he is not used to these things; it is becoming that he should have a place in accordance with his social surroundings." Whether he is rich or whether he is poor, each one wants to get a good parish.

Then again comes in with still greater force the thought, "I have been more blest, probably, than any man ever was in the world, in that *she* has consented; I have now the prospect of possessing the fairest, dearest woman that ever was created, and I don't propose to take her into one of these rugged fields: a man ought to have some foresight; I mean to go into a place where I can support her." And so Love pleads for a home parish with a good income.

And then — and I think it probably the best plea of the whole — the young man says, "I have, in spite of economy and suffering, run myself very deeply in debt for my education, and if I go now into a barren field,

how can I pay my debt?" To which my reply would be: Keep school till you can pay, and then go to preaching.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.

I think that the question of the first field for his preaching is the transcendent question of a young minister's life. And why? Because I believe that on that, very largely, turns his disposition; and that on his moral disposition turns his success as a preacher. If you go into the field with self-seeking, and more or less under the influence of vanity or ambition, you vitiate the power of your preaching in its very source.

It is not by wisdom or philosophy, it is not by rhetoric, though these may incidentally contribute to a man's success; it is by that secret, subtle, invisible, and almost incredible power which a man derives from the Holy Ghost that he succeeds. And that power works in man with what is most generous, most disinterested, most sincere, most self-sacrificing, in him.

Now, in the determination of your life, you turn the rudder when you select your field. If you say to yourself, — however much you may veil it or cover it, — "I will go where much prosperity shall attend my life," you make one of those great, generic choices that mark out the future, and insidiously, but all your life through, it will be a hindrance to you and a limitation of your power.

If you go into your work with heroism; if you sacrifice yourself for it, without knowing that it is a sacrifice, if you give your soul and body to the work of God among his poorest and neediest, so that you are thrown upon the necessity of living by faith, — you will find in

it ample reward, you will thrive by it, and rejoice in it. Thus you will start your ministerial character upon a plane out of which will come all the influences that you need, the mightiest influences that are known in this world. Not by might will you become a mighty laborer, not by power, not by genius, but by that disposition in you and in your sermons that likens you to the Lord Jesus Christ, — that royalty of self-sacrifice, that glory of pitying love, that intense and entire sympathy with other men rather than with yourself, that spirit of personal plasticity by which you may wrap yourself around circumstances, and glorify base things, and seek out low and little things to give them all your power, and be to men what Christ is to you, — wisdom, sanctification, justification, all!

This, then, I say, is the reason why the determination which a man makes in respect to his sphere is likely to have a life-long influence upon his disposition, and so upon that which is more potent in the matter of preaching than any other thing. For I still insist that, however needful and appropriate are intellectual equipment and all the accessories of personal bearing, culture, and refinement, the prime condition of right preaching is heart and soul; and that to make these right is to keep them in accord always with the bounteous, loving, all-sacrificing, self-denying spirit that was manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ.

BUILDING IN A NEW FIELD.

What, then, if a man acts under these influences and goes out into the poor fields; into fields where, for instance, there are no churches; or where, if there are,

there had better be none, — that is, where it would be better to dissolve them and crystallize again. Let us see some of the methods by which a man should build up under such circumstances, and what would be the relation of this kind of work to the office of preaching.

In the first place, no man can go into a new field and not learn very speedily — I know it to be so — how helpless one is that has been brought up in the midst of a highly organized society and is suddenly drawn out of it where society is inchoate; where it is in a forming process; where nobody loves anybody; where a man has to be pope, cardinal, bishop, parish, — everything in himself.

When a man goes into a new neighborhood, — and consider, gentlemen, consider; don't think of Connecticut while I am talking to you, for, important as the State is, it is not the continent! — consider not even the States upon the Atlantic slope; once they were something, but they have ceased to be, comparatively speaking. Consider that great three-thousand-miles stretch from ocean to ocean. Consider the great waves of population that are rolling in. Consider how, from North to South, from East to West, the whole land is now one vast missionary ground. Consider what a host of African people there is to be educated, to be built up into the Lord Jesus Christ; the vast masses of foreigners that are mingling with our people. Consider what a work there is for the Christian heart to do in all the length and breadth of the land; in the North, in the South, in the East, in the West, in every State, in every section, but particularly in the great, new empires that are growing up in our midst! The question

that is seriously asked by every thoughtful Christian mind is: How shall we supply the gospel to these vast, needy masses?

WHAT IS A CHURCH?

Now, in going out among such populations you will find, drifting in the mass, here and there, single families, single individuals, of trained intelligence and moral worth; but society itself, at large, is not yet formed, and certainly its institutions are not formed. One of the first experiences that a young preacher has, in going into new fields, is the necessity of gathering and forming a church. The first question that comes up, then, is this: Have you learned anything in the seminary which will enable you to gather and form a church?

What is your idea of a church? Suppose you were thrown down to-day in the midst of three thousand or five thousand people, along some of the new railroads, that have been gathered there in one or two months,—have you any aptitudes? Have you any thoughts or plans? Do you know what you would do? You have heard the churches discussed as Protestant and Catholic; that is all very well. The notes of the church have probably been sounded in your ears through all your studies. All very fine are these theories of the churches and their claims, but they are very different things from the practical church which you have got to use when you get among poor, common people.

Here, then, is the root of the church: I hold it to be simply *the development of social influences around a central spiritual element*, to keep it warm, to keep it alive. I hold that it is impossible, in respect to the

mass of men, to develop the spiritual element except by the active and the reactive influence of the domestic and social feelings. Indeed, the church itself is founded upon this philosophical principle, namely, that the higher spiritual elements in men are so weak as to need the auxiliary influence of the more common social feelings. Thus the very root idea of a church is to *get men together* in their religious life, that they may help themselves and each other by their social relations.

THE FIRST STEP.

Therefore, in going into any field, your first work will be to find out, Is there one man? If there is, are there two, three? Can I find six persons in this community, whom I can get together to meet me, and who will talk on the subject of religion together, and let one another know their wants, their hopes, their feelings? Take a stick of pine and put it down here, another there, and another yonder, and set them on fire; they will all go out. If you take those different sticks and put them together, they will all burn throughout to ashes. You can keep up an inflammation when you put them together, but you cannot if you separate them and let each one burn by itself. Now, churches are made like fires, and not as the light of single candles; therefore, when a person goes into a new community, the first problem is how to draw together those that are beginning to feel the dawning of the Divine life.

THE PREACHER'S PERSONALITY.

You will probably find, in nine cases out of ten, that there is no strength, or available material, in the

church that is any great help to you. Have you in yourself the power to be the fountain? Have you the passion by which you can take those five, six, ten, fifteen or twenty persons, and, grouping them together, breathe into them a common life, a sympathy, a love of friendship and sociality? Though that is to be inspired and carried up as far as possible, yet that is only the beginning; for through that and by that you must breathe into them a church life and religious feeling. That is the first work. I have seen a great many men in my former life in the West, who came out from New England well equipped and well intentioned. Usually they spent the first year of their life in bemoaning a want of Eastern institutions. The second year was better, but their action was awkward and ineffectual. It was about the third year before they fell into the spirit of their mission, so that they could improve all their time, and begin the work that is to be done in new fields by gathering people together.

But when you go into such a field to preach, you may lay up all your written sermons on the shelf. People won't come to hear them. In the first instance, you will have to take your Bible in your hand and go to them, go to them in their fields, their cabins, or their houses. Preaching does not mean pulpit, thank God! Preaching means making known the unsearchable riches of Christ, to one, to forty, or to a hundred, as the case may be. He who is a teacher, and who pours the inspired, Divine truth into the hearts and consciences of men, is preaching. That is preaching; not yet in the largest development of it, but in its elements, in its seed-forms. A man, therefore, who goes, I won't say to ring the bell,

because there will be none; I won't say to call the people to church, because there will be no church building; but who goes as a minister into a county where are scattered, we will say, five thousand people, goes to hunt up the lost sheep, to talk with them, man by man, household by household, to pray in their families, to make himself literally a shepherd, seeking a scattered flock, — that man is a true *preacher* of the Word, in the highest and best sense of the term.

REFLEX INFLUENCE AND EDUCATION.

And what will be the reflex influence upon you, — you that have to go out after men? If your heart is in it, if you love the work because you love God, and because you really yearn for men, it will become so delightful to you that you could scarcely be induced to leave it. There is a pleasure in the sense of having given up everything for Christ. There is a deep enjoyment in having devoted yourself, soul and body, to the welfare of your fellow-men, so that you have no thought and no care but for them. There is a pleasure in that, which is never touched by any ordinary experiences in human life. It is the highest. If it be solitary, so much the worse. If it be occasional, so much the worse. But there is in it a pleasure, I think, next allied to the raptures of heaven. And a man who has but his Bible and *knows* that; who goes searching out in these new places those that need the truth, and proclaims it to them, and then, as one and another heart is opened to him, gathers them together, organizes them into a society; calls it a church, or an assembly of God's people; begins then to fan the social feeling, bringing

them more and more into friendly relations with one another, teaching them, administering the ordinances, being himself minister (that is, servant, slave of all, doing all work) — that man, I think, will have more joy in the ministry than any other.

At any rate, I look back to my own missionary days as being transcendently the happiest period of my life. I look back to the childhood of my ministry as most of you look back to the childhood of your life. The sweetest pleasures I have ever known are not those that I have now, but those that I remember, when I was unknown, in an unknown land, among a scattered people, mostly poor, and to whom I had to go and preach the gospel, man by man, house by house, gathering them on Sundays, a few, — twenty, fifty, or a hundred, as the case might be, — and preaching the gospel more formally to them, as they were able to bear it.

ELEMENTS OF POWER GAINED— CREATIVENESS — REALITY.

Creativeness, then, is one of the elements that will be developed in you by this earnest striving of all your powers to inspire men, to draw them together, to organize them into a living, growing church. There will also be developed the element of *reality* in preaching. A large amount of preaching has come to be upon questions that have been spun and run out by philosophical consideration into nice but not very useful discriminations — questions of theology, questions of evidence, — a thousand intellectual and moral distinctions, which are not unadapted to the higher forms of civilization, but which have no relation to the great mass of the people.

But he who goes into a new field to work, goes where everything is to be done for a purpose, and with men as they are. There is a reality about everything he does, which does not belong to older parishes; and this will make him intensely practical, intensely real. Going into a new field in this way, one has, if I may say so, an emancipation, a liberty, which the conventions of older society would scarcely allow him.

INDIVIDUALITY.

The exercise of his own primary personal humanity is invaluable to him in the whole course and career of his life. It gives him a certain strong individuality. Men in new countries walk singly, men in old countries walk in platoons, in companies, and in regiments. We do what others do. We want to know what is the custom; and that has the force of law. And so men are gradually conformed. They smooth off all individual excrescences, and adapt themselves to the notions and manners of others. Nothing of this kind can exist in new States and settlements. The consequence is, that men who are there formed have intense individuality, which gives a great deal of force.

I have seen many men in older communities, who, I think, have wasted their lives by repressing the things which are peculiar to them, and in which there would have been a signal power. They have repressed them in deference to the customs of the community; and those things in them which would otherwise have been salient and powerful die within them unknown and unused.

WORK FROM THE BOTTOM UPWARD.

In making your selection of a field, then, when you are about to go out from study to practical work, the principle, it seems to me, on which you should choose, should be, not "What is best for me?" but "What is best for the cause of God among men?" Not "Where can I be settled among refined and affectionate people?" — though I do not consider that an offence, or a crime; — not "Where can I have a stipend that shall amply support all reasonable wants?" — though I do not consider that a vicious desire; — not "Where shall I have an appreciative audience in which my peculiar kind of talent, my refinement, my poetical tendencies, or my subtle philosophical nature, would have a fair, agreeable opportunity?" Although there may be cases (God knows; we don't, always) where a man would better settle in an old community on these very accounts, — I do not debar men from regular churches, — yet, unless a case can be made out specially, it seems to me the presumption is that every young man should go into work at the bottom. And this may be either in the open field, as it were, or in the cities. If you go into the open-field work, as I have already said to you, you will have your special difficulties, such as belong to a sparse population; but, generally speaking, you will be comparatively free from dealing with men of vicious habits. Not that there are not rougher neighborhoods among the new lands, where men are coarse and animal, but that the special "criminal classes" hardly exist there. In cities, on the other hand, men undertaking untilled fields of labor usually find themselves in sinks of bad-

ness, more or less; and, under such circumstances, this choice implies even more self-denial than comes with the attempt to create churches in the newer settlements of the West and the South, because it necessitates dealing with natures far more perverted than the average of men who have the hardy vigor and independence to settle a new country. Therefore, in the formation of schools, mission-schools, or little praying circles, which are nascent churches, in the cities, you have still more to deal with the personal principle. You have to bring to bear on men still more directly the power of your own direct, personal influence. You are to be yourself the channel through which the Spirit of God works upon the hearts of these men; and you must do for them, in your measure, what the Spirit of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ has done for you. You must carry their sorrows. You must take, in one sense, the punishment of their sins. You must suffer with them. You must abase yourself, and go down to their condition.

AN APOSTOLIC EXEMPLAR.

We hear a great deal about the cogency of argumentative preaching, about the eloquence of preaching. When shall we hear about the power that comes from self-abnegation in preachers, — the losing of self? Do you know how many hundred, how many thousand, ministers there are in the United States to-day who have no charges, nothing to do? Do you know how many thousand churches there are that are vacant to-day in the United States; churches already formed, but without anybody to minister to them? Here are a thousand ministers; nobody wants them. Here are a

thousand churches; nobody wants them, — empty, hollow. Never such a time, never such an opening, never such a need in the world as to-day; and yet thousands of men there are — not drafted into other departments, not carrying on a part of the great collateral work — who are destitute of that peculiar spirit which should lead them to "spend and be spent," as the Apostle was willing to do and to be.

Let me read you a paragraph: "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

Now, there are a great many splendid things that Paul has said; but, judging them in the moral sphere, I do not think he ever said another thing that so drank up into itself the very quintessential spirit of the gospel as that last, — that he was willing to spend and be spent for them, even though the more intensely he loved them and sacrificed himself for them, the less he should be loved of them.

We love loveliness. We love them that love us. But Paul knew he was a strong man, and has told us so on divers occasions; he knew he had power second to none; but he gave it to these people who were very dear to him, saying, "I am willing to give more; I am willing to be utterly ransacked and used up for you; I am willing to do it, though I were to find a decrease in your affection and esteem for me in the proportion in which I love you more and more." This loving

against all obstacles, this all-surrendering power of love, — this is what is wanted in Christian ministers.

THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN HEROISM.

There are no difficulties to-day that are not surmountable. The gospel has not lost a particle of its power. I hear a great deal said about Christianity passing away. When Christianity has passed away out of this globe, my friends, there will be nothing of the earth left. Christianity is not the technic of theology ; it is not the organ or the ordinances of the church ; it is the development of Divine power, truth, equity, and love in the most noble of all conceivable forms. And the intrinsic power of such developments will never weaken or fail. It is the type of the Divine nature made manifest by Christ, and, by the Apostles, afterwards, brought as an active force into life and applied to men. Do you believe that the heroism of love, that the amplitude of a cheerful and a heroic self-denial, that tears for others and joy in others, have lost their power in this world ? A man in Christ Jesus to-day is just as noble and as powerful as he ever was, and becomes more and more so, with the refinements and exaltations of life. The trouble is that ministers have become professional, have become class-men. They work for single strata in society ; they work for the higher ranges of life. They are lifted above the necessity of emptying themselves. They can hardly be said to follow Him, the delineation of whose life is a perpetual lesson to us.

" Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. He, being in the form of God, thought it not

robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." There was no obstacle to stop him. It was the holy, impetuous downward plunging of love till it should reach the very bottom below, where there was no sentient life. That is the example of Christ; there is the divinity of Christ; there is the example and the type which the Christian minister is to follow.

THE NEED OF TO-DAY.

So, if he go into his place of labor and preach without fruits, it is not that the gospel has lost its power; it is that he has lost his power. If men seek to do good, and find that they are so restricted and limited in our day, it is simply because they are not clothed with those moral impulses and that moral power from which originally the gospel took its impetus, and which are still just as competent to the production of like effects as they ever were. When we have a generation of men that are otherwise as amply equipped as they are in knowledge and in aptitude for using knowledge; who are willing to make themselves a little lower than the least, willing to take the humblest places, willing to abide there so long as they are needed and till they are called by the unequivocal voice of God's providence away from those spheres,— as soon as we see such a generation of ministers, just so soon shall we see more than the old Pentecostal glories upon the earth! We have need of such ministers.

You cannot lift up the ignorance in our land, you cannot go into the squalor and poverty that begrime our cities, you cannot preach the gospel to every creature, unless you are baptized into this higher Christian spirit, and are willing to spend and be spent, — loved or unloved, as the case may be, — and to continue the work of God in the salvation of souls.

MISSION-WORK THE BEST TRAINING.

And when one has wrought patiently and with the expectation, perhaps, of spending his life in such a sphere as this (and, if God so wills, he will gladly continue to serve Christ there), if afterwards he should be brought by God's providence into a higher sphere, he will be as much better qualified for that higher sphere as the work which he has gone through is a higher education than any mere intellectual training. He never will lose that love for men, he never will lose that close sympathy with them, he never will lose that earnestness, he never will lose that practicalness, which this early training gives. His sermons will glow, they will be full of power, and he will have and will exercise among men that subtle influence which comes from this development of a great Christian humanity by work under circumstances of self-denial and toil among his fellow-men.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Is not the young minister choosing his place a little like a young lady choosing her husband ?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, sir ; I think it is a thing that is done on both sides. I think as many young ladies choose as gentlemen, only it is done in a little more delicate manner, and indirectly.

Q. How often, should you judge, has a young minister occasion to choose any more than, as you stated at the start, between a foreign or home mission on the one hand, and leaving himself at the disposal of the providence of God and the church on the other? Can he pick out a parish for himself honestly or honorably?

MR. BEECHER.—I think there may be circumstances in which a young man will say, "I am shut up, in my own judgment and in the judgment of wise friends, to just so much of a career. I am at liberty to do only just such things"; and where that is honestly the case, I think he is to act as fearlessly and with as little self-condemnation as in any other circumstances. What I wanted to impress upon you was, that with a class of students brought up in an old community, and surrounded by worthy and excellent churches, the general tendency will be to make themselves the carriers-on of other men's work; and that, for the purpose of gaining a higher discipline and education, it is worth every man's while to go into new fields, where he has to begin the work, a creator himself, and become the minister of an older church at a later period, with an ampler education and experience.

The gentleman who asked the preceding questions [the REV. DR. BACON] then said: "I asked that question, not as implying any mistake on the part of the lecturer, for I feel most heartily thankful for the whole current of thought in this lecture, and for the very vivid and desirable impression which I believe it has produced upon all our minds, but for the sake of intensifying this idea: that it does not become a young minister or a candidate for the ministry to be on the lookout for a place where he can get introduced; and that he should leave himself in the hands of God's providence and of the church. And, if he is not

satisfied with that, let him put himself under the care of the Methodist Conference, — there are those here who are able to give him advice in that respect, — and let them dispose of him."

MR. BEECHER. — Well, gentlemen, you may laugh at that matter, but in the West I lived right alongside of Methodists, where I was in the minority and they were in the majority, as is overwhelmingly the case in Indiana; and I saw a great deal of the working of that system. Of course it is not perfect, nor is any other system perfect: but I do not believe there is any other system on earth in which you can take men at the state in which they take them there, with as few aptitudes, and then work up as good ministers out of them by training, as they do. And I attribute their success to this simple fact, that they put the Bible into a man's hand and send him out among the people. It is the grinding of a man upon other men that makes him sharp. Of course, if you have men that are educated to begin with, it will be still better. But the Methodist brethren take men, literally, right from the plow, from the flail, who cannot even speak good English. I knew good "Old Sorrel," as we used to call him, of Indiana; now a sound, well-educated, cultivated man, a man of great influence and power. But when he first went on the circuit in the Whitewater valley, he did n't know enough to tell the number of the verse of the text. He had to count off from the beginning, "one, two, three, four," in order to announce "the fourth chapter and the sixteenth verse." They take just such men, in the West, and put them into a field and set them at work; and they *grow* all the time. They are reading as they ride; their library is in their saddle-

bags; they are reading in their cabins. They unfold slowly, but the beauty of it is, that they are all the time bringing what knowledge they have, to bear upon other men. This working of men on men is the way to make men, and workers.

II.

PRAYER.

MANY an enthusiast, when he begins his career as preacher, is subject to a disenchantment of the rudest kind. He has been brought up to think of the Christian ministry as the noblest profession which can occupy and task the human mind. He has looked at it in its ideal perfection, he has thought of it as springing from the will of God through Jesus Christ, and as standing, therefore, upon the highest place of sanctity. And he loves — perhaps not altogether from selfish reasons — to surround it in his thought with Divine authority, with pre-eminence, with all that shall give him the right to stand, as the representative of the Lord in the community, to make known the law of God, and to enforce that law.

But no man will go into the field to-day and not find himself in practical experience stripped of much of this expected power. He will find the pulpit subject to the same law which acts in other institutions. The strong will be strong, the weak will be weak, the poor will be poor, the spiritually rich will be rich; and there is many a man who expected to walk in the high

places of the earth that goes pitapat, pitapat, down behind the hill, and hides himself in great disappointment. And it is worth our while to take into consideration, not how Christianity stands, but how the Christian ministry and the Christian church stand to-day, and what is their relation to the community.

CHANGED POSITION OF THE CHURCH.

Certainly the position of God's kingdom in the world is not such as it was in the beginning, before the Christian church was born, while it was carried in the loins of the Jewish church. Still less is it as it was in those ages in which the Christian church was the rival of the State itself, and dominated nations and held the universal conscience in awe and fear. That is past. It will never probably come again on earth. Few places yet remain with such ancient notions that children, looking out of the door and seeing the minister walking with all the dignity of the institution upon him, run back, afraid of him. With the old staff, and with the old buckles, and with the old three-cornered hat, has gone a great deal besides the habiliments.

GROWTH OF OTHER PROFESSIONS IN LEARNING.

There are other people in the community that have ranged up beside, in many respects overtopped, the Christian ministry. For, once the church was the main repository of learning, and the ministry were on the whole in advance of the community in solid learning. The Christian ministry still, in, I think, almost every land, may be said to be soundly educated, and to compare favorably with any of the learned profes-

sions; but it has lost the distinction of pre-eminence in this regard. It is no more looked up to as the custodian of knowledge. Not that it has lost any; not that it has not gained; but that other professions, through a larger and more liberal method of education, have also gained in knowledge, and the whole community has grown, both in intelligence and knowledge. The distance between the top and the bottom of society is growing less and less. Not so much because the top does not grow, but because the bottom is growing up all the time. The relative distance, therefore, between the preacher and the hearer is lessened continually, and will doubtless go on to be lessened.

THE SPREAD OF LETTERS.

Nor are we to forget that the pulpit, to-day, is not what it was a hundred years ago, certainly not what it was anterior to that date, as a vehicle for communicating knowledge. It was not only the encyclopedia, but it was the literature, almost. It had the function of making known to the great body of peasants, to the yeomen, to the great middle class, to the ordinary households of the community, everything they learned above the usual level of their own lives. It was from the pulpit, either on the Sabbath or by the prelections of the week, that the most knowledge was gained. The schoolmaster did well, but the minister was the teacher-in-chief.

But, to-day, there is no such thing possible. We speak once in seven days; there are newspapers with fifty thousand tongues, that speak seven times in seven days. We speak what little we can weave into our

periodical sermonizings, but books are flying everywhere; magazines of every dimension and every description are penetrating the nooks and corners of society. The carman that sits down to eat his nooning meal reads as he eats. Men that travel are stuffed with pamphlets, with books, with printed matter of every sort. Science is cheap, literature is cheap, all fictions are cheap, and are serving everything from the highest to the lowest interests of society, from the most sacred to the meanest and wickedest. The pulpit cannot in celerity, certainly not in versatility and abundance, come into comparison with them.

In the work of the dispersion of thought and knowledge over the world, the machinery of general society has been augmented almost beyond conception, and the pulpit has been left far behind. It neither stands ahead of the other professions in general learning, nor does it compare, as a means of diffusing knowledge, with the other enginery which is at play all over the globe.

And therefore men say, "The pulpit has had its day." I say its day has just begun. I say that all this business of taking out the ore of knowledge and smelting it, and manufacturing it, and carrying it commercially to the nations of the earth, which has been so long performed by the ministerial profession, has been in some sense an encumbrance to them. It has not been altogether a power. It has given a distinction to the ministry and an authority to the church; it has wrought out pride and vanity and unwarrantable claims, which the church is better without than with.

THE CHURCH ONE FORCE AMONG MANY.

It seems to me, however, that men do not take into consideration the fact, that, in any community, the church is now only one of the potentially organized influences or forces that are at work. The numerous industrial vocations of society, and the commercial vocations (for they may still be classed generically with the industrial), so widely extended and calling to their service such able men and so many of them, — these forces that thunder at the bottom of society are tremendous, and are not to be despised because they are normal. And if they follow the line of the Divine intent, they are working at fundamental morals, working in the direction of a true manhood. But they are organized, they are necessary, they are going forward with vast power. If one abstracts them, and in his imagination considers what is the force of the hammer and of the saw and of the plane, what is the power of the engine, and of the very many men that manipulate them in society, it would seem as if the globe itself had become one vast smithy, and there were more than human forces working in the shop and upon the anvil. And the pulpit has got to operate in communities that are already possessed by these intense industrial forces. Nay, there are also all the trades and avocations of every kind, the liberal professions, as they are called, and, besides these, the whole swarm of special organizations, — what may be called the skirmishers of civilization, the lyceum, the masonic lodge, the literary association, the benevolent and reformatory and temperance societies, and what not, — hundreds, multiplying with astonish-

ing fecundity every year; all these influences are at work, together with the organized forces of government itself. And when the young man goes into what is called a public-spirited town, he goes into a church that stands in the midst of what may be called a dozen other churches, only secular instead of religious, — organized forces in society. They belong to the Divine Providence, and they are workers together with the church, if a man is wise to understand and use them. If a man thinks they are antagonistic, if he looks upon them with jealousy and calls them a part of the world, he separates himself by just so much from the Divine Providence and from the understanding of God's will revealed in the events of his day. For all these great forces have in them a certain law, that of custom; a certain ethic, an ethic that relates to a man's transactions in so far as the business of any given circle or profession is concerned. They are all operating upon the minds of men.

So when the Sabbath day comes, and I get into my pulpit, do you suppose I go there now with these people fresh before me, all virgin silver, all unwrought metal, thinking that I am the first man that has had hold of them and the last that will have hold of them, in respect to affairs? I tell you these men have been exercised in intellect more than I can exercise them, — these men that have driving behind them forces which impel them to complex, discriminating thought, to all manner of critical inspection and judgment, to a thousand mental processes which I cannot by mere speaking equal, — these men have all of them been touched in their sympathies. They have been driven by a certain

law-conscience in custom; they have all been law-finders or law-breakers, — for to find and to break are almost synonymous in human life. These men are operated upon by a hundred living forces before I get a chance at them. These forces are not rhetorical, they are not merely enthusiastic; they are influences that are a part of life, that belong to the cradle, the table, the fireside, and the shop. They belong to that life which is like a stream from which, when a man is once cast into it, he cannot escape; he goes with it easily, or, if he resists it, it rolls him on in spite of himself.

THE FUNCTION OF THE PULPIT.

The pulpit, then, stands up in the midst of a great organized State, with industrial forces organized and under the supervision of the Divine Providence; and it is one force among many. Now, the question is: shall the pulpit attempt to appropriate to itself the business of all these? Why, it were worse than folly. Shall the pulpit undertake to put itself into antagonism with these? That is, as I have already said, to go into antagonism to God in his providence. What is the great duty of the ministry, in reference to these organized forces of society? It is to spiritualize them, to inspire them, to give a *soul* to the great working, thinking, throbbing world. It is to open to it and let down upon it the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the fire of the invisible world, that higher and nobler consciousness of humanity which is struggling blindly, mutely, down below, but which gets emancipation on the Sabbath day, when men come to know what are the meanings of all those things, dimly seen or rudely felt, which they have

met during the week. And the minister stands there to touch actual experiences, manly experiences, noble experiences; to touch them as the sun touches the cloud-storm that is retiring from the field, when all colors spring out and the glory of God rests upon it.

In this light, we shall go to our preaching work under very different auspices from those which we should be likely to have if we took a *dilettante* view of the sacredness of the Christian ministry, and of the great authority of the men on whom the hands have been placed, and who have the right to say, "Do this and do that," and "Be thou here and be thou there." All that power is stripped away; that is all gone. You cannot bring it back by tears, nor by invocations, — thank God! It is very easy for you to stop the eagle before the egg is hatched, but no art was ever able to put the eagle back into his egg after he had been hatched.

Society is a part of God's great plan, of which the church is the servant and the minister. And society, under Divine influence, has developed these very things; and we ought to recognize that these are part of the fruits of Christianity itself, — of Christianity which is infinitely flexible and susceptible of development, so that it constantly meets the new phases and new aspects of affairs.

THE MINISTER'S POWER.

You will not, therefore, in going out into your work, disesteem intellectual preparation, as though it were a thing not necessary. Yet, remember, you are not going to dominate in the community because you are so powerful in intellect. You are going to meet on each side

of you men that are fully your equals. You ought not to lose that enthusiasm for truth which, if carried a little too far, becomes authority, which takes on the "airs" of right and of rulership. Every man should have such a sense of what is becoming to truth, to virtue, to piety, and to God, as to be filled with a sacred fire of championship, with an enthusiasm for it. But, after all, you are not going to stand in this world as the old priests stood. That place is gone. Men are not going to reverence you striplings just because you are called "ministers." Boys are you now, young gentlemen. May you never forget to be boys as long as you live! But putting a "Reverend" before your name is not going to change your nature or your function. You are to stand in society according to a great allotment, a Divine allotment and reason. It is not fear of you, it is not reverence for you, it is not awe for the sanctuary, for the day, or for the usage, that is going to be the secret of your power, if you have any. It must be yours to impart to all the other great organisms of society spiritual tendencies and spiritual directions. Your genius, your consecrated intellect, all your acquirements, all your knowledge and your practical skill, will be vain, unless you succeed in opening in the hearts of your hearers individually, and in the community where you dwell, a higher conception of what life means, a higher thought of what manhood is; unless you are able to bring down the invisible life, and give it as the atmosphere of the visible.

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE.

The old pre-Raphaelite painters — if you have ever

cried and laughed over their pictures — for they touch the fountain both of admiration and of tears — painted with exquisite coloring and profound sensibility; but their pictures were flat, without any background, without perspective, without foreshortening, without effect of distance, or true form, or atmosphere. So the world is, without religion. The business of the pulpit is to give an atmosphere to this world, and to put things into their relative places and due proportions; to spread out that which the sun brings over the great globe, when it rises with healing in its beams. Your business is to accept the world, to accept mankind, the great brotherhood, and to love them, and to have such sacred commerce with the other life that you become a channel, conducting the Divine grace to men. I believe, too, that ordinances are channels through which Divine grace comes. One thinks that baptism is one of the channels, and others think that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is another of the channels. I believe that there are these side channels, but the main conduit is the soul of man that loves God and loves his neighbor. That is the one compendious ordinance of God, and that is the artery through which God mingles his grace and his power, to be felt among men. And the work of the Christian minister is so to know God, and Jesus whom he sent, so to realize them in his own heart, that he shall be able to communicate them by sympathy, as well as by teaching, to the collective body, to the individual. Yea, they are to feed, in their distributive functions, not only the persons but all the households, all the associations, all the industries, everything that belongs to the community

where they are placed, — thus not simply indoctrinating, which is excellent, which is a very good base from which to depart, but really imparting a Divine inspiration to all those organized forces by which society is developing itself.

The church, therefore, stands, in my thought, as one among many. Is it the highest? It may be, ought to be. It is in its real nature the highest; it is not always practically so There is many and many a household in town a thousand times nearer heaven than the church with its minister and all its elders and deacons put together. There is many a single praying soul, there are poor women in obscurity and in poverty, that God's angels dwell with more abundantly than they do with those that stand in conspicuity of exhibitive holiness. The higher life is very low. "He that would be chief among you, let him be your slave, let him be minister of all."

PRAYER AS AN ELEMENT OF PREACHING.

Now, I have spoken already, in former lectures, of those elements that are personal to you in this work. And I shall, this year, with some latitude of treatment, speak of those auxiliary elements which are made up partly of your personality and partly of things that are not you, that are exterior to you. And I purpose, this afternoon, in order to come by and by to the subject of the prayer-meeting in the church, to speak of prayer as one of the main auxiliaries by which the minister is to perform the work for which the church is ordained among men. I do not propose to discuss the question from a philosophical stand-point. If a man should

tell me that physiologists had been all wrong in the matter of hunger and digestion, and that it had been demonstrated now that hunger was an imaginary feeling, and that coffee and bread and butter acted more through the imagination than any other way; that it was very well to go through the forms of taking them, but that their effects were really through the imagination, and not through any organic relation, — I don't think he would go far to convince me. I hardly think I should be satisfied with any such reasoning as that. If a man should say to me, "It has been shown now that we have no real knowledge of external things, we have knowledge only of subjective states, the light streaming from things giving some idea of form and color and so on; and therefore, if a man would deal with himself honestly, he could sit down in a wilderness of sticks and call it a garden; it is merely subjective, and depends very much on the man himself and his states," — I don't think that would change my feeling in respect to flowers, or fruits, or anything else.

Now, I know there is in prayer a great deal more than question or answer. I know there is something beside simply those questions about which philosophers are pottering. If prayer were a mere order sent to market, expected to bring back so much in a basket every time, I then might enter into accounts and have commercial dealing on that subject. The barrenness of prayer is, I am afraid, somewhat exposed by the low state in which it too often exists.

I do not purpose, either, to enter into that other question, so profoundly interesting and exciting to thousands of men, "Is there any answer to the prayer of

faith?" I regard it as one of the questions of the future. It seems to me, if there be anything that is sure, it is that Jesus believed there was a realm of power, into which the human mind could rise up, which gave to man not only control over himself and his own spirit, but such a participation in the Divine nature as that his will would positively have control over physical laws and forces. There are powers repeatedly promised or hinted at in the sayings of the Saviour. There is an exaltation, — not perhaps to every person, because all gifts are not to all, — but to certain natures there are exaltations that carry with them the nascent power of Divinity itself, as I believe. And the province of answer to prayer — or the question whether men have compelling power with God — is one of transcendent importance. I do not intend to discuss that now, but to look at prayer simply in its more generic features, and as one of the inspirational elements by which the church is to develop in the community its higher life and humanity.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

And, looked at in this largest view, what is praying? Dropping out, as we may say, the lower elements of it, what is prayer but the conscious lifting of a man's soul into the invisible realm, into the presence of the invisible Father? What is it but shutting out for the moment, with the closing of the eye, all conscious sensuousness and secularity, and rising by the effort of the soul, through silence, up into the region where God sits, and dwelling — though but for a moment — out of the body, in the presence of the Eternal God? You may say, when once there, "He doth thus and thus and

thus"; but all the details come back into this generic element, that it is taking men out of conscious sensuousness, and lifting them up into an actual spirituality. It is bringing them out of time and standing them upon the threshold of the eternal world.

The habit of prayer, looked at in this way, elevates the individual, elevates any household; it civilizes, spiritualizes, etherealizes, the community itself.

And you cannot pray so poorly — if your prayer be sincere in that one single thing, if it be the real thought that is going up, and you have the conception of God in your heart — but that the mere *soul-bath* one gets in things unseen, the mere lifting of the wings in the great beyond, is itself worth all that anybody ever claimed for prayer. And one of the very first things that the Christian Church and Ministry should do is, as the Saviour did, teach the disciples how to pray.

I shall treat, then, to-day, first of personal prayer, and second of ministerial prayer; and, to-morrow afternoon, of social prayer, or the prayer-meeting.

TEACHING MEN TO PRAY.

Inspiration of Desire. — As regards the work of the Christian ministry in teaching or inspiring men to pray. I have to say, in the first place, that one of the secret arts, — if you use the term "art" in the sense of wisdom, — one of the subtle, secret arts of the ministry is, not didactically or demonstratively to make men pray, but, by a wise knowledge of how to teach them the thought, the feeling, to inspire them with a *desire* for some such higher utterance. If a man preaches, therefore, hard matters of fact, if he all the time secularizes

his sermons, if they are ethicalized to death, if they lack the savor of the something better, the something higher, the something nobler, that is for man in his communion with God, men will scarcely learn to pray except as they learn to perform any other duty. But the secret of praying is, to want to pray. The secret of wanting to pray is, to have excited in our souls certain aspirations, certain yearnings, certain desires. The conscience hungers and thirsts, the imagination yearns and longs, the affections rise above all the bounds of ordinary experience in life.

Prayerful Preaching. — There is the sense of wings, I think, in every soul that is touched with the least ideality, and it is desirable to so preach to men that they shall have an upward yearning. Break up base content. Infuse into men a glorious discontent with things as they are. So idealize everything, so preach it, that the necessary things, common things, — all of them, — shall have a halo about them, a suggestion of something higher and nobler, till the soul is in an exhalant state, till it shall tend to pray always, — that is to say, to have a subtle uplifting and going up of the thoughts, out of the physical and material, and the near and present, into the invisible and holy.

Much of this spirit of prayer can be thus infused, while you are not actually praying, through your way of dealing with men. It is whether you are aiming at the base of their brain, where lies the great workshop of life; or whether you are aiming at the middle of their brain, where the great household and social affinities are playing; or whether you take the top, where is the holy spirit, where we touch God, if we touch him at

all, in our thought and inward life. Now, sermons that are constantly working upward into that, tending toward that, although they may never discuss prayer, are all the time tending to spiritualize men, to give activity to that side of their nature whose expression must necessarily be invocation and ejaculation.

But let me say that, while we are laying the foundation for instruction in this way, I have felt in my own ministry the constant need of doing a great many other things. To tell the truth, it was a good while after I had come into the church that I was like the deacon who was asked to pray by his minister and refused; and who, on being told that he had the gift and ought to pray, said he knew he could do it, but he always hated to. To tell you the truth, I hated to pray; it used to be a most disagreeable, enforced duty, partly from one reason and partly from another, which it is not necessary now to specify. I remember that it was a long time before I could get back to the habit of my childhood, and kneel down and pray with any comfort. The moment I bent my knee, I also lost my thread; and the mechanicalism of attempting to pray morning, noon, and night would ruin my soul, I think. If I had to pray by the clock, if I had to have a mechanical order, it would derange all my spiritual tendencies. I could not do it. Little by little, I came to the feeling of wanting to commune with my Father; and thus I learned, after a while, that we had to go into our congregation just as the Lord did. His disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Unlearning Wrong Ideas. — Generally, the first step towards teaching men to pray is to get them to unlearn

their prayers. Insensibly they have formed their idea of what prayer is. It is the way that the minister prays, it is the way that their mother prayed, it is the way that holy men have prayed whose prayers are recorded. To attempt to pray in that way is worse than to attempt to wear another man's clothes, without any regard to size. It is worse than the attempt of a little child to walk with a stride as long as the father's, whose hand he holds. For, if there be anything in this world that must be personal and absolutely genuine to you, it is the aspiration. Suppose, when I courted my wife, I had got down one of the letters preserved in the family, — one of my father's to my mother, — and I had sat down and read that to her as a letter of courtship! It was a very good one, in its time. But I think prayer is like the powder that a huntsman uses; he never can use it but once.

I am speaking now of my own views, and not of the views of everybody. There are prayers that are like stairs, — you begin at one spot and you always land at another spot; and persons say that they were like the stairs that Jacob saw in his vision, on which angels ascended and descended, and that it takes them up to heaven. Such prayers are perfectly right for those who want them and can use them. But to my thought prayer is *wings*, and a man must go, not where the stairs are put, but just where his own will wants to go, — to the east, to the west, to the north, to the south, higher, lower, with many or few strokes, anywhere, as birds fly in the summer heavens above us. And you never can fulfill the Apostle's injunctions, "Pray always," "Be instant in prayer," "Pray in season and out

of season," — those things cannot be done, if prayer is a set act, instead of an evolution of feeling or a holy ejaculation.

THE ELEMENTS OF PRAYER.

The sources of prayer are like the beginnings of the Ohio River, — a thousand musical springs, separate one from the other, none of them more than a handful, first pouring out from the rocksides, and by and by joining together to make the great river below, on which boats and great steamers will float. And we have the river Prayers, the channel for accustomed usages; but the beginning of prayer, that which is to make the great after-channel full always, and full of good and genuine prayer, is this solitary thought, that prayerful emotion, this impulse of the heart. The devout soul, in all its ten thousand moments, is of such a nature that it is all the time exhaling heavenward in poetry, in rhapsody, in narration, in reverie, or in speech.

For prayer is not asking for something. I have nothing to ask for, since I have known what God's Fatherhood means. I have but one petition, and that is, "Thy will be done." It is not for me to wake the sun. It is not for me to call the summer. It is not for me to ask for colors in the heavens. All these things are abundantly provided. The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; and I am God's beloved. He died for me by his son Jesus Christ. He thinks of me. Do I ever forget my children? Shall a mother forget her babe, cradled in her arms, by day or by night? And shall God forget us, in that great rolling sea of his thoughts, in that everlasting fecundity of his love, in the infinite

bound of the Divine tenderness and mercy for man? Is there anything left to ask for? When I am tired, I carry my weariness there and lay it down. If I am in sorrow, I am glad when I think of the Sorrowing One. The God of all comfort is my God. When my burden is heavy, it is not so heavy as was His cross. When the world seems circumscribed and barren, and I a stranger and a pilgrim, the world like a coach is swinging on its road, and soon I shall hear the horn that tells of its arrival.

Ten thousand thoughts of this kind, that spring from every side of human experience and touch human life in every part,— these are elements of prayer. So that when I pray, I rejoice; or, as the Apostle would say, "giving thanks in prayer." Prayer is cheerful to me. Prayer is sweet to me; it is not ascetic. I know that I am wicked; I know that I grieve God; I know that there are times when it is sweet to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" So there are times for the majesty of storms in summer; — but thunder-storms do not march in procession all the way across the bosom of the summer. There is more brightness than darkness; more tranquil fruitfulness than agitation and thunder.

MAKING PRAYER ATTRACTIVE.

And now, if you are going to make the gate of prayer strait, solemn, awe-inspiring, for the sake of making people reverent, coming thus through their sensuousness, and trying that kind of empirical method to excite devotion in them, — if you attempt that, what do you do? You make prayer unwelcome, unlovely. You make the soul not want it. But if prayer is communion, if

it is the sweetest of all converse, if it includes in it everything of your experiences, high and low; if the children in school or in the household can kneel down with you and love to look upon your face; if you can make them rise up from a scene of prayer feeling that, after all, it is "as good as a play," that is, that there is no *force*, nothing that is angular, nothing that restrains in it, but all that is sweet and attractive and joy-breeding, — if you can do that, you make prayer lovely, you make men want it.

LIBERTY IN PRAYER.

It is not necessary that men should pray a great deal; it is not necessary that they should pray a great while. I think this is ordinarily one of the faults of prayer. It is one of the faults, as I shall show tomorrow, of social and of public prayer. Prayers are of such a kind that I do not wonder prayer-meetings are the lumber-rooms of the church, that all the things that are good for nothing else are stowed away there!

We must broaden, then, and enrich our conception of what praying is, of the liberty of it, and of the naturalness that there should be in it, and of the right of every man to make his own prayer. "What if I cannot make one? May I not use the forms?" Yes, just as sick men use crutches, — not to supersede and supplant their legs, but to strengthen them, till they are strong enough to walk without crutches.

But suppose a man is unfruitful? Well, your own slender fruitfulness of prayer is better for you than an ample fruitfulness that is somebody else's. There is a great deal of prayer that is something like the orna-

ments I see in parties, where they bring in, in a tub, a tree to which are tied oranges and orange blossoms; for a night it looks as though it were an orange-tree in full blossom and full fruit, but to-morrow morning you will see that they were all tied on overnight. They answered a moment's purpose; but one orange were better, if it actually grew there, than a bushel under such circumstances.

But in helping your infirmity — I would not be strait-laced in that matter. Help yourself by any means, but never forego liberty, personal liberty, — never fold your wings. Never pray by proxy, when you can pray by silence in your own thoughts.

Now, to inspire this spirit of prayer, to make men enjoy it, is a supreme art. I had almost said that when a minister has the power to inspire gradually in his church a desire for praying, an enjoyment in prayer, his work is comprehensively done in the world, and he could almost say "Let me die." Because I think that out of this spirit of communion with God, out of this spirit of nearness to heaven, out of this spirit of an upper manhood, out of this spirit of the gloriousness, the joy, and the beauty, and the bounty, of the heavenly land that just overhangs us, — out of this comes almost everything in the church that has moral force in it.

EXALTATION IN PRAYER.

So much for the attempt to teach your people and to inspire them with the spirit of prayer. The other point, and the only other one that I shall deal with, this afternoon, is your own praying among your people. It is very difficult to speak on this subject, because it is

so much a matter of constitution; so much in the way men are organized, so much in temperament, so much in education. I think I may say that no part of ministerial preparation is more neglected than that of singing and praying. We are indoctrinated very thoroughly, we are taught in the history of the church, we are drilled in the order and discipline; but how much instruction do we need on the subject of prayer! I do not know that I can give you any instruction about it except this, that I think the most sacred function of the Christian ministry is praying. I can bear this witness, that never in the study, in the most absorbed moments; never on the street, in those chance inspirations that everybody is subject to, when I am lifted up highest; never in any company, where friends are the sweetest and dearest, — never in any circumstances in life is there anything that is to me so touching as when I stand, in ordinary good health, before my great congregation to pray for them. Hundreds and hundreds of times, as I rose to pray and glanced at the congregation, I could not keep back the tears. There came to my mind such a sense of their wants, there were so many hidden sorrows, there were so many weights and burdens, there were so many doubts, there were so many states of weakness, there were so many dangers, so many perils, there were such histories, — not world histories, but eternal-world histories, — I had such a sense of compassion for them, my soul so longed for them, that it seemed to me as if I could scarcely open my mouth to speak for them. And when I take my people and carry them before God to plead for them, I never plead for myself as I do for them, —

I never could. Indeed, I sometimes, as I have said, hardly feel as if I had anything to ask; but oh, when I know what is going on in the heart of my people, and I am permitted to stand to lead them, to inspire their thought and feeling, and go into the presence of God, there is no time that Jesus is so crowned with glory as then! There is no time that I ever get so far into heaven. I can see my mother there; I see again my little children; I walk again, arm in arm, with those who have been my companions and co-workers. I forget the body, I live in the spirit; and it seems as if God permitted me to lay my hand on the very Tree of Life, and to shake down from it both leaves and fruit for the healing of my people! And it is better than a sermon, it is better than any exhortation. He that knows how to pray for his people, I had almost said, need not trouble himself to preach for them or to them; though that is an exaggeration, of course.

PERSONAL HABIT AND PUBLIC DUTY.

And now, my young friends, without dwelling longer upon this matter of ministerial prayer, for my hour has expired, I have only this to say, — that I think it grows principally out of the habit of prayer in your own souls. Some people have asked me, "Do you ever write your prayers?" Why, I had rather undertake to make a diagram for every particle of my blood, what it should do all day, than to attempt to sketch out a prayer. Prayers are as flowers that scatter themselves all the hillsides over, and all the valleys through, according to the will of the shining sun that draws them up toward it. Prayer must be spontaneous, voluntary, effluent as the

atmosphere itself. It comes to those who pray much,—I do not mean those that spend a great deal of time in the closet, because you can while away a great many pleasant hours over dull books with interjectional prayers; but those who have thoughts that rise spontaneously up to God,—for that is prayer. I have friends who are so dear to me that I hardly ever go a whole day unconscious of them. And sometimes, for hours together, I couple very much of my personal history with theirs. Have you never had friends that were so dear to you that, though they were a thousand miles away, you talked with them in the room, and, if you had a picture, there were two pairs of eyes looking at it, not one? Have you ever carried on this kind of double existence with friends? Well, it seems to me that is the attitude of the soul that loves God,—that knows itself to be his, that expects to dwell with God, that does not think of him as a great judge, or as a despot, but as the sweetest, most genial, most affable, the nearest, the noblest, the most beautiful, the most to be desired, the altogether lovely; the one that made the sense of beauty in me, and is infinitely more fond of beauty than I am; the one that touched in me the fountain of poetic feeling, and is himself transcendently more poetic than all that ever sung on earth; the one who is the fountain out of which sprang everything that we love, or revere, or desire here! If such be our thought of God, and our life is hid with Christ in God every day, it is out of that fountain that comes pulpit prayer.

PRAYER THE SECRET OF STRENGTH.

And if you pray in the pulpit, and are dry, do not be discouraged. All streams run small at first, but grow better, grow deeper. Take more care of the inward man. Be nobler. Oh, you have to be good men, you have to be noble men, more generous, more disinterested than anybody else about you! Sermons will not do; it is *life* God wants to bless, and it is your life, if you are settled in any parish, that God will make the means of grace to men. And you have to live lives of holiness, not after the Madame Guyon sort, or any particular sort, but after *your* sort, which is the purity of heart and the simplicity of faith and the freedom of will, ascending toward God. Live in that, grow in that, deepen in that, and people will begin to say, "Our minister's prayers, it seems to me, are more nourishing than they used to be." Then, when men vex you and trouble you, instead of getting angry, pray. Then, when troubles come, instead of feeling that you have too much trouble, pray and pray. When you find that talebearers in the community are after you, and you are annoyed and vexed in your parish, and there is scandal going around you here and there, pray, pray! It is the best way to head off little troubles. It is the best way to lighten great burdens. Pray always, be instant in prayer. Pray deep, deep as your soul goes, high as your thoughts can rise, and then you need not take much more trouble about your pulpit prayers, — they will come. And when I hear a parish say, "Our minister may not preach as well as others, but oh, it is a balm and a refreshment to hear him pray!" I

congratulate them, they are not far from the gate of heaven.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Would it not be well for the congregation to be made to feel that they are expected to join in the prayer?

Mr. Beecher. — I suppose that when a man stands before his congregation he feels joined to them. I am conscious of that myself. I seem almost to pass into my congregation. I feel as if we were all one, as if my utterance were the utterance and the voice of all the sympathetic souls in the congregation. A great many say, "Let us pray," I suppose, because they have got to open the door somehow, and that is the way it has been customary to open it.

Q. May a person be eloquent in prayer without a vivid imagination?

Mr. Beecher. — I think that all prayer has imagination in it. I think that faith is spiritualized imagination. Faith that works by love is ideality, or the imagination joined with affection and working in a spiritual direction; so that all sense of God, all sense of invisible things, means imagination. But the imagination, like every other thing, may exist in different degrees. It may be strong enough simply to be recipient, or it may be strong enough to be both recipient and in a small degree creative, or it may be positively creative, or efflorescent. The last form gives the highest development of it, carries one into the very borders of what we call genius in that matter. I think there is a genius of prayer just as much as of poetry. I knew a woman so illiterate that she could not talk better

than a common negro. She came from the South, though she was a white woman, and lived in one of the southern counties of Ohio. When she began to pray, after a very little her spirit came to her; she seemed to drop the mortal part, and she fell into the language of the Old Testament. I heard Judge Fishback, now gone, say that he had heard all the able men in the West, but he never heard a human being who had such power, who affected him as that poor ignorant woman did, when she got into those higher moods, and brought to her second or higher nature the use of all that sublime language of the Old Testament that seemed to be the channel to her spiritual feeling. I have heard old negroes in Indianapolis pray so as to make me wish I was in their place. There is a genius for prayer; but then it is just as it is with the element of beauty. The highest development of beauty makes you an artist; then you go along down until you come to that development in men which makes them decorators; and then lower down, to the great average mass of men who simply have a sense of what is tasteful or beautiful. A sense of beauty is distributed from the top to the bottom, though in different degrees; and the power of prayer follows the line of the gift. The gift is great in some; it belongs to all, but in varying degrees; and is susceptible, like all other gifts, of development by use.

Q. Some men do not have the power of expression, — of word expression. Now, what do you think of that yearning that there is in the Congregational Church — I do not say whether it is right or wrong — for something like a liturgy?

Mr. Beecher. — I should say that that ought to be met by hymns. I shall come to that in my lecture on

music. There are no such prayers on earth put into form in liturgies as those that have been put into hymns. The trouble is that nobody thinks a hymn is a prayer. When a prayer is being made in the form of a hymn, — in which the music gives it wings indeed, — people think that is the time to scratch their head, the time to stand up and look about, or to sit still and take it easy, the time to hoist the window and get a little more air, the time to look after their hat, the time for the sexton to go with a whisper around the house. The desecration of prayer in hymns is something perfectly shocking!

The Congregational Liturgy is in the Hymn-Book, I think. Where fifty men want a liturgy, there is no law that I know of in heaven or on earth to prevent their having one. It is the liberty of the Congregational Church. But I believe there is one already made. It is said that liturgies must grow, they cannot be built; and this liturgy has grown. From the time of David to the time of Wesley, and on down to our day, God has been inspiring men; and they have given forth their divine utterances in psalms and hymns and sacred songs. A wise use of the Hymn-Book will develop more liturgical effect, I think, than can be got in any other possible way.

III.

THE PRAYER-MEETING: ITS METHODS AND BENEFITS.

I SUPPOSE there is hardly any other part of church service that is regarded with so little estimation in the community at large as the prayer-meeting. And I think facts will bear me out in saying that this feeling is participated in by the church, on the part of the greatest number of its members, nine out of ten of whom look upon it as perhaps a duty, but almost never a pleasure. It is a "means of grace"; and they feel about it as I did when I was a boy about being washed in the morning and having my hair combed. It was better than going indecent; but it was an exercise that I never enjoyed, and I was heartily glad when it was over. In most churches I think that is the feeling in regard to the prayer-meeting; that it is dull; that it is for the most part without edification; that in some mysterious way it may be blessed to the soul's good, — but how they do not know. Persons resort to it when they cannot very well help it. Now and then the meeting blazes up; there is a revival; there is some novelty; something has transpired that

excites a momentary interest; but perhaps ten months in the year, on an average, the prayer-meeting is eschewed by the great body of the church, and by the community wholly.

There is another bad side to it, — children do not like it; and anything that children dislike in religious service, habitually and universally, has reason to suspect itself. There is an element in true religion that follows the example of Christ, — the children wanted to come, and the Saviour called them and put his arms around them, took them upon his knee, and laid his hands on them and blessed them. And, from that day to this, I think that where service is delivered in the true Christ-spirit it will be found that in one place or another, there is something for children; and the children will find it out. Where the minister does not interest the children, where the meetings of the church have nothing for the children, something ought to be changed or added. Revision is needed.

THE DEMOCRATIC THEORY.

Now, it is notorious that the prayer-meeting is "below par," and therefore it may be the more striking to say that, for my part, I regard it as the very center and heart of church life, — not necessarily of preaching; although its reaction upon preaching may be made to be very great. We have thrown off hierarchical methods of worship; we have advanced — I mean the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches and their *confrères* have advanced — the theory of the equality of the church in its members; the idea that it is a family and body of believers; that it has in itself inherently the gifts

of divination; that it does not derive its graces through any ministerial channel except reason and the ordinary methods of communication. This is our theory. And it behooves, therefore, all those that believe in such a constitution of the church, to see to it that the church does develop some fruit that shall sustain the theory. If, therefore, the church life is barren, if it is meager in development, we lay ourselves under a just liability of being thought to disprove, by our life, that which we attempt to prove by our philosophy or by our reasoning.

POWER OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES.

If there is anything in the world that ought to develop church life, it is the gathering together of the whole body of the brotherhood, the men and the women in the church, for mutual edification. Do you not believe that there is a constant communication of the Holy Ghost with every heart that is striving God-ward,—yea, and every one that is not? Do you not believe that every heart that has been made willing in the day of God's power, that is in a recipient state, is receiving from day to day a realization of the Divine presence, an inspiration in duties? Is there not a life going on in the hearts of God's own people, under all the varied conditions in which they are living, that is worth some record, some interpretation? And is it possible that one man, no matter how studious, no matter how gifted, — is it conformable to our idea of the constitution of the church that one man, standing in the pulpit, shall be able, simply because he devotes himself to instruction, to pour out upon a congregation such knowledge of

experimental truth as inheres in the life of the congregation itself? If there were any process by which we could look inside of men's lives, their unconscious as well as their conscious religious life; if we could follow the mother in all her moods and musings and prayers and anxieties, and all the methods by which she is lifted out of and over, and carried victorious through, any discouragements and trials in the rearing of her little church, the household; if we could go with those that are discouraged and downhearted and not naturally hopeful, whom all the world seems to beat against and to crush, and see how their feebleness and weakness is from day to day helped and sustained; if we could gather out all that which the young feel in their weary moments; if we could see how men strive under temptations, against pride; how men that are borne in upon in the business of life strive against avarice; what battle is going on in the shop, in the street, and wherever men are; what the whole round of real, practical godliness is, in its weakness, its overthrow and defeat, in its matched battle or in its victories, — if we could gather out all these things and bring them into some form and lay them open, do you believe there is a single man on earth, though he were a prophet or an apostle, or both, that could equal the revelation of the truth of God as thus given in the lives and history of all the members of the church? The great and wonderful work going on in the lowest and the least is more stupendous in its relations to the Godhead and the eternal estate of the blest than the external greatness of any kingdom in the world! And it is all the time stimulated and de-

veloped. Here is the growth of passions; here is the growth of moral emotions; here is the dawn of love, waxing stronger and stronger unto the perfect day; here are the joys, the sorrows, the upliftings, the downcastings,— all the ten thousand things which not only teach us to pray, but which pray in us and through us, "with groanings which cannot be uttered." Is there any voice for these things, except as we gather up here and there a scrap from the congregation and make it known? Now, the ideal prayer is this voice of the church, telling what it has learned of God in its daily conflict, bringing out the whole of that great range of Christian work that is going on in any community where there is a true church of Christ. For, as the Apostles were called to testify that they had seen Jesus, and that he was raised from the dead, so the Church should testify that Christ is raised in them from the dead, and tell what he is doing by his work in them.

THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH.

Now, I hold, in the first place, that, according to our idea of it, there can hardly be a prayer-meeting in a hierarchical church; because there can be no such thing, as we understand it, where one man is the channel through which the church worships, and through which alone God speaks to the church. But the prayer-meeting is the voice of the church and of all its members. It belongs to our peculiar organization, and it can scarcely be in any other system. Instead of developing or encouraging it, many of our churches are asking, "Can't we help our leanness and our barrenness with a liturgy?" I do not object to a liturgy

more than I do to banners on a house, if it pleases men; but I would not regard it as the indispensable method, not as something that we need, until we have exhausted that which belongs to us, namely, the power that inheres in the very radical idea of a church among us, that God communicates with every heart, not mediatorially, — by earthly mediation, — but by direct impact, by direct soul-piercing; that he thinks into men, and that their thoughts are the rebound of his; that he pierces them with divine emotion; and as, when the sun pierces the earth, up spring flowers and out burst fruits, so, when the soul feels the Divine inshining, all that is noble in it rises efflorescent and victorious.

And when you shall have developed that in the church, if still you complain of leanness, and want of interest, and barrenness, then bring in a liturgy, then bring in some other thing; though I think the combination of a liturgy with Congregationalism is the mingling of foreign elements that do not go well together. It is a patch on the old garment; one or the other tears, — and it does n't make any difference which; there is a hole.

This being the general idea of a prayer-meeting, you will not have to go far to see what are some of its advantages and what are some of its hindrances. Of these things I shall speak to you plainly. And mostly I speak from my own observation and experience. The ideal of the prayer-meeting, then, is a family meeting, — a household coming together and telling, all of them from time to time, what God hath done for them; helped to do it by the discriminating leadership of whoever presides in the meeting, by questions, by vari-

ous methods, calling attention to things that otherwise escape the notice of brethren, and bringing out the full record of the dealings of God with his household, that church.

THE PRAYER-MEETING PROMOTES FELLOWSHIP.

In the first place, it produces, or tends to produce, the almost unknown quality of which so much is said in the New Testament and so little known in the church, —*fellowship;* a sort of joyful inspiration at the sense of a "fellow" by your side, that kind of relation one to another which persons have who are met as on Thanksgiving day, or on Christmas, when a family comes together. Everybody is glad, and nobody can tell why, except that It is my brother, it is my sister, it is my father or my mother, my uncle, my aunt, my grandfather. It is that feeling of heart-exultation, that overflow of gladness; and persons run around and laugh. "Why do you laugh?" "Well, because I feel so happy!" Now, gather a church together; bring them into such relations with each other that they all feel that yearning, that fraternal feeling, that gladness, that exultation in each other. Ah! you never can do this as long as you seat people apart in pews, set them up straight, and make it a sin for them to look at one another, telling them to think with awe about holiness, driving them up out of the sphere of ordinary feeling. They may come in very properly, put their hats down very properly, sit properly, and nobody speak above a whisper, but you cannot produce the feeling of fellowship so. But there is a genial and social element, a loving element, if men

know each other, — as they will come to do, — out of which fellowship will grow.

IT DISCOURAGES CENSORIOUS JUDGMENT.

And after a little while this kills uncharitableness. There is not a man living, with any grace in his soul, who does not feel a yearning toward another that has done wrong, and owns it, and endeavors to get over it. Do you know why it is that we feel so toward that old church-member, forty years a member, and still so stingy and so proud, — why we all look askance at him? It is because he does not feel that he is sinful; it is because he does not feel that he is proud or avaricious. But if he had come into the house of God among his brethren, and with the simplicity of a child said, "Brethren, you know my weakness, but you do not know how I have struggled against it"; and if you had heard him in his prayers ask that God would deliver him from avarice; and if he had talked with the young people in the church, saying, "Now look at my example; I am trying to fight against it, but don't you get into any such course as that," — you would feel a sympathy for him. Your fellow-feeling for him would soften your judgment of him. Another man is naturally a peacock, who spreads himself, and who is full of the glistening reflections of other people's brilliance; he is laughed at, and people pick him to pieces, — for there is a vast amount of joyous cannibalism in a right Christian church, — and they are all pulling the feathers out of him! But suppose that man in the gathering household, not ostentatiously, not going around as a professional experience-teller,

should at his proper time and place, and with evident sincerity of feeling, confess, "This is my disposition; my brethren have spoken to me about it, but they do not need to; I know it; it has been revealed to me in a thousand ways; and I do not like it, I strive against it," — you that are meek should help to restore such a one. Suppose you think, "That man knows it just as well as we do." Did you ever see a brother that would point at his younger brother and say, "That fellow, you know, has got a club-foot"? We never ridicule the infirmities of our brothers and sisters, and certainly not those of our children. They appeal to our compassion, as should the constitutional moral peculiarities of men, especially if they have been developed and exaggerated in the world.

What we want more than anything else in this world is, that men who would go to the stake for the doctrine of total depravity shall admit that they have some of it themselves, and that they are making a brave fight to overcome it. It is wonderful what a grace there is in sympathy. God blesses it in a great many ways. And if in the church there were such a thing, if you could by judicious ministration here, or by gifts there, or by both, bring brethren really to speak of that which is going on in their own lives, it would be a great help to them and to others; it would create and foster the true feeling of fellowship in the church household, and allay harsh judgments and uncharitableness.

IT CHERISHES MUTUAL HELPFULNESS.

Now, when we are saying that there are a thousand sweets while we are on the journey to Canaan, we are

always thinking of *poetical* sweets. But the journey lies *in* men; it lies in your pride, your laziness, your envy, your jealousy, your passions; in one or another form of human weakness, — there is where the journey is, and where the work of God is going on. Why should not men be trained to make with sufficient frankness, not indelicate disclosures, but a proper and just reference to these things among brethren for one another's sympathy and helpfulness? If you had reason to think that your brethren were manfully striving to overcome their faults, I do not believe you would ever meet them without wanting to put your arms about them. I know persons whom I never go past without feeling that I would like to lay my hand on their head and bless them. Yet they are some of them wretchedly imperfect. But they are genuine, they are sincere and earnest in their Christian endeavors.

IT DISCOVERS MUTUAL NEEDS.

Fellowship can hardly be developed by any fanciful measures, — fellowship of men as Christians. You *can* fellowship; oh yes. If ye salute those that salute you, what thank have ye? If ye do good to those who do good to you, what do ye more than the publicans or the Pharisees? If you like folks that are *likable*, why not? That is all down hill. You like this one because he is a clean, round, splendid fellow, and interests you. That is all well enough; of course you like him. But how is it with the scrawny folks? How is it about the people that do not interest you? Do you like them? Don't you go about picking up elective affinities or spir-

itual affinities, getting your companionship here and there? Don't you go to the table and take everything that has sugar on it, letting all the plain things go? Get hold of men because they *need* you. You should fellowship with men, not because they have intellectual treasure and genius, and make the hours so golden for you, but because, like you, they are sons of God, and fight, like you, in the same battle. Soldiers in the field have what they call battle-companions, — pledged to mutual helpfulness and ministration; if one is wounded or falls, the other assists him or cares for him. They go into the fight with these understandings. Have we any such thing in the church? Yet there never was a severer battle than that which is going on all the time in the church, where the heart is touched with Divine aspiration, and is struggling against the temptations of the world. The church should be trained to the disclosure of individual needs and trials in the prayer-meeting, so that those needs may be met. It is part of the minister's business to so train it. There are a great many books which you never have read, and, luckily, never will read; but there are other books that are written by the Holy Spirit, page after page; there are books, the reading of which would make you a thousand-fold wiser than books written by the greatest human authors, — what God is doing in silent souls. You ought to find it out, and I think the prayer-meeting is the place to find it. No man will answer the true ideal of a minister, who, having a church, does not have a prayer-meeting, and who, in the prayer-meeting, does not try to find out what is going on with his people by this kind of disclosure.

IT DEVELOPS POWER IN THE CONGREGATION.

This serves as a counterpart and a counterbalance to the pulpit itself. In most churches, the pulpit is apt to be a lectureship. The minister goes there, and what does he do? He gives out a hymn; it is sung by the choir, and the congregation hear it. He reads the Bible, and they hear it. He leads in prayer, and they hear it. He preaches, and they hear it, — those of them that are awake. He gives out another hymn, and they hear it and go home, and that is the end of it. What have they done? They have been recipients; everything has been done for them, upon them, to them. They have done nothing. There ought to be a counterbalance to this. This is putting all the power into the pulpit. But one of the things that should measure the power of the pulpit is the magnitude of the living power which it develops among the congregation. If a minister goes into a church which is all pulpit, and stays ten or twenty years, and goes out of it and it is all pulpit still, while he may have done a good many things, there is one which he has not done, — to his discredit! He has not developed the church power as distinguished from the pulpit power, — the brotherhood.

It is a good thing to have a noble father and mother; but one of the things that noble fathers and mothers must do is to bring up their children so that, as they come one after another up to manhood and are turned off, they too are noble. And it is through these minor meetings, where you get close to men, and conventionalities are broken down, and intimacies are established upon other grounds than those that rule in social life,

that this work is to be done, if it is to be done anywhere.

IT DISCLOSES GIFTS AND GRACES.

Then, the prayer-meeting does another thing; it develops the gifts that are in the church. There are gifts that lie hidden,— the possessors themselves don't know of their existence. There are men who have received no culture, and yet have great good sense. There are men who have had no opportunity for learning the art of expression, who, nevertheless, have that discrimination, that balance, that insight, which constitute tact. They have comprehensive judgments of men and things. They are able to manage their fellow-men out of doors, to control business and carry it on, under a thousand inequalities, successfully to an end. But they are not supposed to have any gifts in the church, because they never volunteer, they do not say anything. The idea largely prevails, that, if men speak in meeting, they must speak expositorily, or hortatorily, both of which things I think to be hindrances in prayer-meetings. Of hortatoriness, I shall speak in a moment. It is the *bête noire* of prayer-meetings; it is the devil that ought to be exorcised to begin with. But men say, "I have nothing to say," thinking that if a man speaks he ought in some sense to imitate a minister; that speaking in a prayer-meeting ought in some way or other to be ministerial, and that the speaker should discuss a point, unfold a doctrinal truth, state some discrimination; that some catechetical matter should be explained. Now, if you get rid of that idea, there are a great many men who have a great deal to say. As, for instance,

the value of patience is up, and I say, "Mr. ——, what has been your experience in respect to that? You had a family of four boys; they all died drunkards, did n't they?" He rises very slowly; he is very broken in his language; he says, "Yes, they inherited that tendency from my ancestors." "Did you find it very easy to bear with them?" "Oh! when my first boy came home, it seemed as though I would burn the house down over my head; it seemed as though I would give up everything; it seemed as though I was all on fire; my brain and everything was upset." He goes on and gives the way in which his feelings were changed. You question him, you help him, you bring him out. "How was it when the second one came in?" And that man will unfold the history of a father-heart striving and moaning after faith and hope in God, and holding on to those boys that are bringing disgrace on themselves and wretchedness on the household. There he has been for, to my certain knowledge, twenty years, carrying four boys, clinging to them, losing his own life almost literally for their sake. There is a grand epic of patience, wrought out in a Christian man's heart! Cannot I develop that by a few questions? And when the Spirit is working, and when men are thus speaking, you will not make grammar an essential grace. It is in this way that you develop gifts.

WOMEN TO TAKE PART.

I believe in women speaking and praying in meetings, as well as preaching and lecturing and voting, — not voting in meeting, but *Voting*. I feel that the church has lost one half of its best power in the exclu-

sion of the sisterhood from speaking in our meetings. But revivals know no law, and the consequence is, that when we have revivals and morning meetings, even the stiffest churches allow mothers to get up and ask prayers for their children. And, once get them on their feet, with a very little dexterity you can catch some very nice silver and gold fish out of them. When they open their mouths, throw in a question. In that way, I have frequently done what I could not do in any other. It is said, "Open your meetings to women, and you will get only the chaff. Only the scatter-brains will speak, and all those who are considerate and modest will be silent." Why should they not, when you sit glowering there; and, though you throw the noose, they know you don't want to catch *them?* There is no encouragement, no help, no temptation, nothing; and only those speak that don't care for you or your desires. And what hope or courage is there, under such circumstances, for anybody that is self-respecting? But presently prayers are being asked for children, and one father gets up and says, "I have a son at sea, and I ask prayers for him"; and another one gets up and says, "I have a son of whom I have heard that he is lying sick of a dangerous fever, and I ask prayers of the brethren for him." "Are there any other requests to be made?" An elderly woman, rising, says, "My son and daughter are dead, and I have five of their children to take care of, and I strive with poverty, according to my best endeavors; I ask the sympathy and the prayers of the brethren for these five." "How many are there, madam, did you say?" "Five." "How old are they?" "Well, the oldest is now seventeen, and he is the strongest one among us, and

then — " "What are the ages of the others, madam? What is the disposition of this eldest son, and has he ever shown any inclination toward religious things?" "Yes, sir; he has, at times, shown a good deal of feeling." I can get a good speech out of her before she knows it, and you know it will be substance, every bit of it; it will be meat. And so you can get a well-regulated woman talking in prayer-meeting, without anybody being shocked or hurt. In that sly way, young gentlemen, you can circumvent the old fogies and have the women talk in meeting without offence.

If I have any remembrance of my own mother; if I have a remembrance of the other, the second mother, that brought me up; if I have any remembrance of my sisters and of those aunts that were more than Virgin Marys to me, and who dedicated themselves to virginity that they might give their lives to charity; if I remember the prayers that they uttered over us little children, the instruction they gave us out of the Word of God, the conversations that they held, — I know that I have derived the deepest, the sweetest, and the truest religious impressions of my life from the utterances of woman. And if woman has these gifts, and can speak to children in the household, I say that she has no right to put her light under the bushel of the family, but that she should set it on a candlestick, where it shall light all that are in the house. And the church has a right to the gifts of these women, — the mothers and the sisters that are doing the great work of life. It is gold too precious to be lost, and we are dying for want of just such material; and yet, on a mere quiddity, on a mere punctilio, we are excluding from the

church elements that would make us incomparably rich. And so we have our beanpoles of propriety, but not a morning-glory twining round about them and blossoming to the glory of God.

I will not in this indirect way attempt to make a lecture on women's rights. I simply bring this in as an illustration, — and it will also suggest a way in which you can bring in unpalatable subjects merely as illustrations.

(I was speaking about the way in which the prayer-meeting develops the gifts of the members of the church, and all these remarks, therefore, you will set down under that head.)

THE PRAYER-MEETING MAKES TRUTH PERSONAL.

Then, meetings for prayer, properly managed, take truth from its generic condition and bring it home to men as a personal thing. It becomes casuistry. You develop cases of conscience; you develop grades of disposition; you develop truth in its relations, as you cannot in any other way.

One of the troubles which every minister of any standing and experience has found, has been how to fashion sermons so that a great truth could, after all, be made to branch till it reached out and touched all the individual cases. He has had the feeling come over him, "Well, they are simply infinite!" And a sermon may begin like the handle of a splint broom, but it will end with as many different points as there are in the end of the broom. So you feel that you cannot do it. True, you cannot so well do it in the pulpit. But, if you have a living church, — and it depends upon yourself whether

you have or not, — if you make your prayer-meetings so social, so genial, so elastic, so open-mouthed and open-hearted, that you can ask anybody questions and they are not ashamed to talk, and talk goes backward and forward among them, — and almost every man sees things a little differently from his neighbor, — and one and another asks, "What shall I do in such and such a case?" — you will find that a truth which you state generically instantly becomes specific, — that it is multitudinous. I am continually struck with this, that when I introduce a topic in prayer-meeting, and open it as it runs in my mind, I hardly get through presenting it — I am hopeful, I look at things in the light of courage and hope — before a brother on my left hand, who always has a kind of melancholy caution, brings me up with, "Don't you think, Brother Beecher, that if persons were to follow that out in such and such relations it would be liable to such and such perversions?" "Oh yes, I never thought to stop up that hole"; so then I give it a little plaster in that direction. And so it goes all around, and men look at the subject from some experience of their own, from some habitude of their own minds, from some new, different philosophy of their own. They put questions which result in the end in bringing this truth home, from its generic state, to a personal truth, to black and white, to each particular person. He gets it as he wants it.

So truth, when you bring it into a congregation, is like a roll of cloth, which may be cut and fitted to all the different sizes of men. It comes in cloth, it goes out garments. When you come to see how truth stands in its relations to the individual man; the infinity of

it, the universality of it, the multitudinousness of it, the richness, the wonderful power in it, — this is one of the most convincing evidences of its divinity. The truth, when you come to study it in relation to men's wants, is like nature itself, when you come to study it in all its infinite diversities and minute differences. This is the work of the prayer-meeting. Don't you begin to feel ashamed that you have done so little with the prayer-meeting? Don't you begin to think that the prayer-meeting is the long-lost art, and that the church ought, more than on anything else, to pivot on that? I think a church is more likely to live a great while that pivots on the prayer-meeting, than those are that pivot on the pulpit.

IT ATTRACTS OUTSIDERS.

There is also in this matter an application of the prayer-meeting to which I wish to call your attention, — the effect which a prayer-meeting of this kind has, from time to time, upon outsiders, upon spectators. In the first place, the freshness, the liveliness, and the reality of it bring men to it. Your meeting will be crowded in a little while. It will grow; and by and by you will make chords vibrate in men's hearts, as you bring out the power that is wrought by the Holy Ghost in the personal experience of individuals, — filling the whole air with a new sense of Providence and Divinity, sending men home enlightened and strengthened in the midst of their struggles, and enriched by the conscious presence of God in a thousand ways. People will come to the meeting; and you cannot get a room big enough to hold them under such circumstances.

THE EFFECT ON SPECTATORS.

I call your attention to the effect which it produces upon spectators who are not Christians. Take them into an ordinary prayer-meeting, and it is the most dangerous place you can bring them to. It produces on them very much a sense of imprisonment. It is galley-work, and they don't like it. The idea of going to the trouble of being convicted and converted in order to get into a prayer-meeting is rather discouraging to them; and I must say I don't blame them. But let a man going by step into a *real* prayer-meeting. He hears singing in there, and rousing good singing too. He rather likes hymns, and he slips inside of the door and sits down. A man gets up, after the meeting has advanced, and says, "Brethren, our pastor has been opening up the subject of Sincerity, and it came pretty near to me. I try to be sincere, but I must confess that in conducting my business I slide sometimes, before I think. Now, yesterday I went into a transaction something like this," — and he gives an account of an affair in which he had been a little too quick for the other man, and rather got the best end of the bargain; and he says, "Well, I did n't feel particularly happy all the way back to the store. My conscience rather accused me, and I made up my mind that I should go and rectify that thing." The man who slipped in is the very man with whom he had that dealing, and who had said of him, "Damn him! he is a member of the church." That is what he said immediately after the business transaction, but what does he say now? "Bless his heart! The old fellow has some

feeling, has n't he ?" Now, any man that can change a "damn" into a "bless" is doing a good work. But here is a man who judges men by no charitable standard, who sees things as they are in business. He comes in and sees a man who had all his life had faults. He finds out that that man knows them, and is trying to get over them. He knows that that man tried sharp practice over him, and sees that he feels sorry for it. He is speaking about it, though in an impersonal way. "Really," says the new-comer, "I guess there is some sincerity, after all, in religion." When he goes home, he says to his wife, "Where do you suppose I have been ?" "Well, I don't know. I suppose around to Fox's, to see Humpty Dumpty." "No, guess again. Where do you suppose I have been ?" "Well, I don't know. Some theater." "No, guess once more." "I give it up." "I have been around to the prayer-meeting." That is a surprise to her. Says he, "I tell you what; it was really a good meeting. I positively enjoyed it." He has to tell it all. When the time for the next meeting comes round, he says, "Put on your shawl, my dear, and let us go around to the prayer-meeting and see what we will get." They go around, and find that it is fresh, and means business. He may not believe all he hears there, but, after all, there are many truths. Men come together, and they take hold of the very roots of subjects and discuss them. They try to be honest. That man cannot help himself. He is already convicted. He has not a Mount Sinai conviction, perhaps, but he may have a little haycock conviction. He has got a consciousness of faults. He has got the preliminary tentative states that, under

ordinary, suitable, fair instruction, will develop in him. Manly sympathy, really humane feeling toward him, will bring that man right along. Ask him, "Don't you think you have faults? Don't you commit sins? Are you not guilty of derelictions both to God and man? Is n't it time for you to begin to think about this thing?"

Other men come in there. They are exhilarated, they are lifted up. Don't let a prayer-meeting know that there is anybody there but the "brethren." Don't say a word to "sinners." I would shut up a man's mouth who began to talk in that way, as quick as I would turn the faucet of a wine-cask if the wine were leaking away. It is the actual sight of what we mean by piety, it is the sight of imperfection, it is the hearing of groans, it is the sight of tears, it is the recital of joys, it is faith, it is hope, it is love, it is fellowship, it is helpfulness, — not in any of their grander poetical forms, but as they exist in actual men and women, — it is the battle of life going on before men's eyes, that make the most imperative and impersonal of all ways of preaching the truth to many men. There is many a man that can stand the great fifteen-inch gun of the pulpit, that cannot stand this *mitrailleuse*, this multitudinous fire of the whole church.

I have been accustomed in times of revivals of religion to say to persons awakened and coming slowly along in their steps toward the light, "Come to the morning prayer-meeting." The most converting agency I have known in my whole ministry has been the morning prayer-meeting, when I could keep the hounds off of men, so that they should not be exhorting them and

telling them how sinful they were. Let them alone; let them see what the grace of God is in the brotherhood.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. How would you stop those exhorters?

Mr. Beecher. — Well, you cannot always stop them. You have got to drive prayer-meetings just as you do horses. You cannot keep flies from biting them, nor them from whisking their tails, in a summer's day. You have got to make the best of your annoyances. The absurd saints that I have had, the ridiculous creatures that have come in, the interruptions that we have had! Meetings brought to a blessed point, — like a cow that has given a good bucket of milk only to put her foot in it, — to be entirely ruined! There is a kind of spiritual *bummers* that run around to prayer-meetings. I will tell you more about that, however, next week.

Q. What about the length of prayers in prayer-meetings?

Mr. Beecher. — Short, generally, but long when you can't help it. I would n't want the Ohio to overflow its banks, or the Miami to run over, but once a year. We used to let them when the snows melted on the mountains, — we could n't help ourselves. Down came the torrents; and I have seen the biggest boats navigating the streets of Lawrenceburg. I liked once a year to have a good freshet; but I did n't want any more.

That matter, I think, may almost always be controlled with a very little drill.

Q. I would like to hear a word further, if you are not going to take it up hereafter, as to how the leader of the meeting shall open the subject. There is danger of his so opening it that people will say, "Well, I can't say anything after that!" What is the way in which a leader shall open a meeting so that everybody shall feel free to speak after it?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, that is a very important consideration. One of the things that every minister ought to have implanted in him is, that he is not going to do well every time, and that he is not going to do well at first, always, and that he has got to take up his cross and to carry it in just such things as these. He has got to learn his trade while he is practicing it for a living. In opening a prayer-meeting, very likely no directions can be given. Practice will teach. With any considerable *gumption* to begin with, you will very soon see when you make your opening too good. Avoid making too good speeches at the beginning of a meeting; do not say all that you have to say on a subject. On the other hand, avoid any such magisterial manner, any such jealousy of the cloth, that nobody will feel disposed to come forward. Then, if they will not come up when you have opened a subject, question them, call them up. "Mr. ——, what do you think of that idea?" Well, Mr. —— has to say something, and the moment he does, you tackle him, because he won't say much unless you dispute him, and you will have a little bit of an argument. But, the moment anybody begins to talk, somebody else puts in a word, and you ask some other one for his views. Then it will go around. There are a thousand arts of that kind that are perfectly innocent and allowable, which a man must learn.

Why, young gentlemen, being a minister means being busy, I can tell you, from one end to the other of your life; either busy in your study, busy on the street, or busy in your meetings. If anybody has got to be observant, fruitful, wise, full of tact and inspiration, it is the man that undertakes to lead a congregation in prayer-meetings.

I may still further answer to that question, that a wise pastor, who is conducting meetings, will be conducting meetings all the week long. There will be an undertone in his mind. All manner of feelings and thoughts are running through your mind, and you may just as well have something which will be of value to you. You see a man. You say to yourself, "I wonder how I can get at that man; I wonder how his sensibilities are." You will survey him, and look at him, as an engineer looks at a fort. You say, "How can I attack that man?" General Sherman never rides through a country, I believe, without looking at the topography of it. He says, "There is a good place for a battery; how finely my flanks would be protected over there!" He is engaged in noting the military advantages of the country.

A minister has got to be busy all the while. Whenever you see a man, eat him. Whenever you see a man, dissect him. Think how you would approach this one; how you would get at his conscience, whether by going down through the scuttle of pride and vanity, whether by coming up through the cellar of shame and fear. You see children doing things; you see bees, — a thousand things that are full of analogies. If need be, put them down in your note-book. But keep collecting them all the while, — let your thighs be yellow.

Q. What is the value of the young people's prayer-meeting?

Mr. Beecher. — I think it to be very great. It is, of course, subject to all those infelicities that belong to youth, which young people do not believe in, but old people do. It is subject to a great many crudenesses, but the average result is admirable. It brings out and gives form in young Christians to obscure feelings. It gives them courage and definiteness of commitment. It teaches them how to use their implements in a Christian warfare at an early period. It knits them together, one to another. In a thousand ways it is beneficial.

Q. What would you say about the long prayer, so called, before the sermon? Old Dr. Ely, of Munson, used to pray thirty and forty minutes. Is such a prayer a means of grace?

Mr. Beecher. — I should say it was. A man brought up under such circumstances, who was not patient, might think his was a hopeless case. So of long family prayers. A man entering a house after the prayer was begun, and waiting a long time, asked a boy how long before his father would be done. The boy replied, "Has he come to the Jews yet?" "No," was the answer. "Then it will be half an hour more." Of course, such stories are to be taken with allowance; they are exaggerations. But exaggerations are in rhetoric what magnifying a flower or a beetle is in natural history. We cannot see them so well unless we do magnify them.

Long prayers are, as a general rule, nuisances. It is not often that a man is so wound up in feeling that nature compels the feeling to iterate and reiterate itself. A great loss or bereavement, if it does not put

one to silence, leads one in few words to repeat, and repeat, and repeat. I have seen mothers that, like the King of Israel, walked about the room moaning, "My son! my son! my son! my son!" a hundred times. Others I have heard say, "O my God! O my God! O my God!" It was mute prayer, — ejaculatory prayer, running on as long as the wounded heart had blood to bleed. But for men in cold blood to come into a meeting and, without any great feeling in themselves or any great feeling round about them, to open up Euphrates or the Mississippi, — it is abominable! And if they should do it a few times in my meeting, I would stop them, or I would cut them in two.

Q. Do you not think the objection of formality can be brought against asking a blessing at table three times a day? What can you say about the origin and desirableness of this custom?

Mr. Beecher. — Well, I can say that there is no obligation in the custom, and its formality depends entirely on who does it and how he does it. I dined with an English clergyman in London, and we had got about through the main dinner and were coming to the fruit, — Dr. Raymond and I were sitting on opposite sides of the table. We were in the full tide of conversation, and there was no other company except the clergyman and his wife. After the cloth had been removed, — I was in the midst of a story, I think, — they both rose, and I heard, "Blb-lb-lb-lb!" and they sat down again. "What, sir?" said I. I found out, afterwards, that he had said, "Lord, make us thankful for these blessings!" Well, now, I consider any such thing as that absurd, — worse than useless. But to

see the children gathered at the table, the old father, venerable and sincere, and the mother, reverend and matronly, sweet-hearted as a saint, the children all in their places, hungry but yet waiting; and to see the old man bow his head and recognize the hand of God in all those bounties, in a short and appropriate thanksgiving, — I don't know how that is to others, but it makes *my* bread sweet. I like it! If anybody don't, he is perfectly at liberty to let it alone.

Q. Is there any more objection to that kind of formalism than there is to the shaking of hands when you meet?

Mr. Beecher. — Or saying good bye; which is, "God be with you." Nobody thinks of it, but it expresses this, — good-will. Even my English friend, I suppose, regarded his returning thanks as being a general indication that he had yet remaining a sense of the Divine favor in his dinner. If they are formal, the remedy does not seem to me to consist in abolishing them, but in making them sincere.

IV.

THE PRAYER-MEETING: ITS HELPS AND HINDRANCES.

I SHALL resume the subject of prayer-meetings under the general head of its Helps and Hindrances. Let me premise that you may be in danger, from the variety of statements and from the incitements to the ideal of the power and admirableness of the prayer-meeting which I continually attempt to develop, of going to your work in such a state of mind that when you do not succeed at once, or well, you will be thrown back in discouragement.

HARD WORK FOR THE MINISTER.

There are two very important and very difficult things to do, namely, to maintain a lofty ideal, and yet not be disgusted with ill success under it; to keep on trying; not to content yourself with poor results, but not to give over because you cannot reach the mark which you have in your mind. This will be particularly true of your ministerial life. And it may be some comfort to you by and by, though of course you will not feel it now, to know that the most difficult

thing that you will have to do in your ministry is to maintain a live prayer-meeting. It is about the hardest work you will ever know. It will tax your ingenuity the most; it will tax your resources, your power over men and over yourself, your administrative faculty. He who can take a parish and develop in it a good prayer-meeting, carry it on through years and still have it fruitful, various, spiritual, — he is a general. It may be that he will not excel in the pulpit; the prayer-meeting, under such circumstances, is his pulpit.

If you go into your work, therefore, with some discouragement, remember what I tell you, that as "he that bridleth his tongue is perfect," — that is, he who has grace enough to do that has grace enough to do anything, — so the minister who knows how to make a good prayer-meeting is perfect, in a sense. It is true that there will be many times when the meeting will develop itself like a geyser, with vast volume and stones upspringing and filling the air as well as shaking the earth under your feet; but, like the geyser, it will gurgle back again, and leave mud and smoke behind. It is not difficult in times of revival, in times when the whole community are developed in the direction of moral excitement, to arouse feeling; it is difficult then to keep it down, to give it anything like moderation. The meeting then takes the bits into its mouth and runs away with you

But when there is no general excitement, in summer months, in winter months; when there is no feeling anywhere; to maintain the heart of the church which beats in the prayer-meeting, warm, genial, crescent, — in this is labor. I may say in this is genius, if you succeed.

DIFFICULTY OF GATHERING THE PEOPLE.

It is very difficult, in some places, to draw the people together for a weekly prayer-meeting. There is that hindrance to overcome, and every man must overcome it in the particular way indicated by the circumstances of the field in which he is working, — for it is impossible to give a general rule. Then, where the population is large, there is an indifference to contend with. I have already alluded to the fact that prayer-meetings are the least popular of all meetings in the church, whether with the members of the congregation or the members of the church itself. And it is for a very good reason, — they are generally the driest of meetings. So that you will often find, when you come into a large congregation, that the weakest place in it, the leanest part of the service, will be the prayer-meeting. You are to hold yourself in the main responsible for this state of things, after you are well established in your work.

THE FOLLY OF SCOLDING.

Above all things, do not scold your people because they do not attend. I do not believe that any amount of whips or of skill could drive a swarm of bees into a field where there were not a dozen flowers. They won't go. And to get them into a field where there are a thousand flowers, there is no need of whips or of driving. Now, it is for you to kindle such an interest there as will draw men. Generally, in your ministry, do as Paul did; encourage, praise, never blame until you have with consummate enginery prepared the way

to blame. When Paul wished to rebuke people, he first stated all the good he knew about them, and all the pleasant things he had heard about them, and how near and dear they were to him. "Nevertheless, brethren," he would say, "I have somewhat — " and then comes in the other thing! In general, to scold your people because they do not come to church on Sunday is to hit those that do come and miss those that do not. To scold or to blame your people in any way because they do not come to meeting, or because they have no feeling, is not wise. It is your business to produce the feeling that will make their attendance voluntary and cheerful, that will make it impossible for them to keep away.

HOW TO START PRAYER-MEETINGS.

In the beginning of a prayer-meeting of this kind, there are both physical and moral elements that enter into it. I have here a question as to the best way to start a prayer-meeting in a place where there is none. Well, the way to start a prayer-meeting is the way you would start a fire. If it is an old church, it is like a fireplace where there has been something raked up overnight; in the morning, there is not a coal there as big as a thimble. But you get together the few that there are. You never think of bringing in a whole armful of wood and whanging it all down into the embers. You lay the wood aside, selecting the driest pieces you can find, and whittle up shavings; and, having gathered the few little coals, you put a few shavings upon them; then you blow the little pile gently at first, and up springs a light blaze. Then you lay on a few more shavings, dealing with it all the time as carefully and tenderly as a mother

does with a baby; then, by and by, you put on a dry stick, picking out the fittest and the best, and soon the flame will get power; and at last, when the whole fire is kindled, you can put on what you please, green wood or dry, it will consume the strongest and toughest materials.

In the beginning, remember that the prayer-meeting turns on this fact: it is the development of the *social element in the religious direction.* Suppose, in an old church, in a great state of deadness, one or two brethren feel that they cannot live so, and there are two ways proposed. One is, to get the minister to preach a big sermon on that subject, and then to ring the bell, and call everybody to come down into the conference-room or lecture-room, and try to have a prayer-meeting. That will fail, nine times in ten. Suppose, instead of that, you look around to find some one who feels as you feel. Ask him to come to your house for prayer. Both of you look around for a third who shall be congenial, susceptible, warm. Get three together. Three are very powerful on the fourth, and four on the fifth. When you have got a praying center that begins to whirl with some degree of power, it will suck in materials just as fast as you ought to have them come. Begin at the bottom, begin low, begin and work the principle of affiliation, — of the moral affinities. Work it patiently, and in faith that there is a principle there, and you will succeed. And you will not be apt to succeed in any other way.

So, then, the first step in a prayer-meeting where the interest has died out is to go back to the very first elements; make it perfectly simple, perfectly natural,

be yourself fervent; and fervency creates fervor, as sparks lead to sparks.

POVERTY OF MATERIAL.

Another of the hindrances which we find in our prayer-meetings arises from the poverty of the material which is developed in them. My observation teaches me that there are very few men who think enough to have anything to spare for their neighbors. In books, meditation abounds. There is a good deal of talk about it, but I have never seen much of it that people had to hand out for small change on occasions. There is a great deal of philosophy in the world, but it expends itself mostly and is absorbed in practical things. And when you take men who have always been accustomed to work out all that they have in them toward the concrete, toward visible things, and bring them together in a meeting, and expect them to rise up in their places and develop that which their whole life has been a training not to develop (namely, abstract meditation or anything of that kind), you will find very soon, that, whether it be devotion or meditation, there is but very little of it grown, and much less brought to market.

So, then, you will find a great poverty in the materials which you work. There will be good Christian men and women, and yet it will be very hard to make much out of them in a prayer-meeting. Remember this; don't let your expectations be too high. Keep your expectations down and your will up. Determine that you *will* have meetings, first or last, if it takes years. Don't be impatient on the way. You are working at

tough material. You are doing the best work that can be done, but it is necessarily low. Then, the worst of all difficulties is not that people are barren; it is that they are blind, and naked, and sick, and do not know it.

NEED OF WISE LEADERSHIP.

Prayer-meetings usually fall into the hands of a few hackneyed leaders, if the pastor is not himself present. Now, deacons and elders may be excellent men as elders and as deacons, and yet not be gifted either in spiritual fervor for devotional purposes, or in the tact that is requisite to lead a meeting. I have seen deacon-smothered churches and elder-smothered prayer-meetings, any number of them, where men went into the leadership of the meeting who made everybody afraid. The young people did n't dare to speak, nobody dared to speak. There was a sort of "*order*" in the meeting. To be sure, worship is something, edification is something, freedom is something, but oh "Order! order! order! Let everything be done decently and in order." And so they were as orderly as a pyramid of mummies.

STALE SPEAKERS AND SPEECHES.

Then, too, you have the hackneyed speeches and hackneyed prayers. There is one man in every prayer-meeting who has to get up and confess that he don't live up to his privileges and to his light, and he tells you that every week, or it may be every month, through the whole year. He never gets a great way beyond that. There is another man who is always confessing his sins, and confessing and confessing, in a

general way, — never the special sins that his neighbors see in him, but always the doctrine of sin, and not the practice. So a few men of this kind run right around in that same barren path, the regulation address and remarks.

Worst of all, come the exhorters, or men who are always urging folks up to their duty. This I shall speak about a little farther on. But these hackneyed speakers in prayer-meetings take the life out of them. Frequently they are the best men in the community in other respects, but they are not adapted to that place. Young men, how are you going to get along with these old gray-heads? Well, you cannot at first; but there is a good deal that can be done by good sense and patience, and real kind, humble feeling. Many of these men have in them better springs than have yet been tapped. There are many of them that can do a great deal better than they think they can, and you can *help* a good deal out of them. They are to be revered, if they are venerable; they are to be respected for their work, if they have been useful; they are to be treated as fathers, and not with contempt. They are to be treated, especially by a young pastor, with the greatest affection and kindness. Nevertheless, it is always fair to have a design on a man for his own good; and it is always fair for a pastor, seeing these men in the way, to do two things, — first, to attempt to get more out of them, to talk with them, to lead their thoughts to other things, to get them to express other things when they speak, and to shorten their prayers when they pray; secondly, to develop another center. Bring in new material; get hold of the young, and put new life,

new blood, into the meeting. This is a kind of co-operative antagonism. It is taking the meeting gradually out of the hands of those who have ridden it to death, and putting it into the hands of those that have come up under better auspices. The change will be gradual, little by little. An old church is very much like an old building. You have the quarrels, which may be represented by the rats and mice in the walls. You have all the difficulties, which are the leaks, the weather-boarding and shingles off here and there. You have the smoky chimneys, the squeaking doors, the ill-adjusted steps, — a hundred things that are to be remedied. You begin to patch in here and there, — to revamp; working on the house little by little, till, by and by, you get into a state that is wholesome and comfortable again. An old church has to be worked very much in this way. I have sometimes thought it would not be bad to disband old churches. Dr. Payson used to say that if he could have his own way he would scatter his church entirely; and then all that wanted to come back he would n't take in, and all that did n't want to come back he would draw together; indicating that the forward ones were the spiritually conceited, and that the retiring ones were the modest and the humble. And although this is, of course, an extravagance, it marks a thought.

The difficulty of combating in churches the old hereditary troubles, coming out in meetings and other social relations, oftentimes occupies the mind of the young pastor fully as much as all the rest of his work put together. Old churches will go down from generation to generation and have something very noble, even

grand, in them; and, except in special cases, you are not to think of getting rid of the difficulties as you might burn a barn to get rid of the rats. But you have got a work of this kind to do, when you take a church, that will require your patience, your assiduity, your tact, your knowledge of human nature, your grace, the control of your own temper, the richness and depth of your spiritual feelings.

THE MINISTER TO TRAIN HIMSELF.

There is another element of which I would speak, — the estimate which you yourself, and those of your members who are under your influence, put upon the prayer-meeting. If you prepare your sermon laboriously, if you make Sunday your idol, and spend all your available force in that direction, and count your little social meetings during the week as "only prayer-meetings, — nothing to do to-day but my prayer-meeting," — if you put that kind of emphasis on it, you certainly will not make much out of it. Although training for the pulpit is one thing, and training for the prayer-meeting is another, I think that the man who is to excel in prayer-meetings must train more for them, though differently, than for the pulpit. I should be very sorry to be forced into the conduct of a prayer-meeting without having anticipated it during the day; not so much that I might think what I was going to say, but, as it were, to *beat up* my nature, to get into a higher mood, to rise into a thought more of the Infinite; to get some such relation to men as I think God has, of sympathy, pity, tenderness, and sweetness; to get my heart all right, so that everything in me should work sympatheti-

cally toward certain devotional ends. Get yourself trained.

Never, therefore, regret your prayer-meetings; the harder they are, the more you need to be strong in them, the more you need to feel responsible for their right conduct, to have full-heartedness in going into them. Train for them, then; not so much by preparing the way for what you shall say, — though that at times may be wise and useful, — as by having the right moral forces, the right sympathies, in yourself.

LET EVERY MEETING TAKE ITS OWN SHAPE.

In conducting prayer-meetings, I have noticed one mistake which is constantly and naturally made, and that is, when you have had one good one, to have the next a very poor one. Just as young ministers, when they have preached one good sermon, think, "There, now I will preach another next Sunday that will just be the mate to this." And when on the next Sunday they come to preach it, it is stale, it "all flats out" in their hands, and they do not know what the difficulty is. My father once said to me, "Henry, never try to run a race with yourself." If you have preached a good sermon, do not try to preach another just like it; do not try to fill up the same measure that you have filled. The probability is, that while there may have been much labor and preparation for that good sermon, there was also much of that volunteer force, much of that native, that unexpected help, which you cannot get again by mere volition. Time and again I have seen a prayer-meeting that rose and culminated, full of sweetness, of freshness, of Divine spirit, full of

the best fruit of the Spirit in man. Everybody went away edified, happy, and joyful. And when they came together the next time, they came saying, "Now let us have just such another." There never was and never will be just such another. You may turn a kaleidoscope a million times, and the rays never will fall twice alike. And so meetings, since they spring not from prescribed forms and definite rules, but are the unfolding of the voluntary conditions of feeling in hundreds of persons, can never be just alike.

Therefore, in the conduct of a prayer-meeting, while you may have some theme or topic, while you may have in your mind some idea how it shall shape itself and run, always be vigilant to see if there is not a germ in the meeting itself, and be sagacious to discern and catch it. Frequently you will go thinking, "I will spend to-night on the subject of prayer," and you make some attempt on that subject. But some one will get up and bring in another theme, and he will feel it so much that you will find everybody else feels it. Seize that; do not go back to the old topic, you have got the real meeting there. And with a little nourishing, blowing, catching all the sparks and bringing them together, you will very soon have a meeting that opens up in nobleness and beauty. Let every meeting develop the vitality that is in its own core; let it unfold its own germ. There is a germ, if men only know how to develop it.

FEELING CANNOT BE FORCED.

Let me say a word on the subject of attempting to force feeling. It is true that feeling begets feeling by

sympathy, but it is also true that persons may be so much beyond their neighbors in any given direction of feeling that the chasm between them cannot be filled up. Then, feeling acts just the other way.

I recall scenes in the West. I recollect being at a city on the Ohio River, and a brother who had been laboring for nearly four weeks in camp-meeting revivals was sent over in advance of Synod, which was to meet there, to prepare the church for it. He went with all the nervous fervor that there was in the labor he had just been going through, and commenced pouring himself out upon the church, bringing them together, telling them of their dead condition, setting their sins in order before them. But he was in such a state of excitement, so far above them, that nobody caught the spirit. They rather took his exhortations as the negro slaves across the river in Kentucky took kicks, — they only crouched and looked sullen, and went on. And when Synod came together, that was the state of the church. They had been on the anvil, and with small hammer and trip-hammer they had been pounded unmercifully.

I recall very well one Sunday night. Brother Snead had had the general care of the meetings, and I was appointed to preach on Sunday evening. That was a sermon born out of the extremity of desire. I had preached several times, and with no special effect; but there was one person whose conversion had lingered, and for whom my whole soul had gone out. And in the strong desire that I had, I struck out a plain and quiet sermon on the parable of the Prodigal Son. I went with that sermon into the pulpit on that Sunday

night, and began preaching it. It was of the love of God, and the way in which he looked upon sinners, — his yearning. And, without any attempt to produce feeling, I drew picture after picture and scene after scene, until about the middle of the sermon the audience broke down, and it was like a rain on the mountains. It was the beginning of a great and glorious revival of religion there. When I came out of the pulpit, Brother Snead said, "My dear brother, you have given them sugar when you ought to have given them tartar!"

Now, this attempting to enforce the strong feeling of conviction and dread of the wrath to come might have been wise under some circumstances: but here was a case in which it was manifestly unwise, and was defeating itself, and where a much lower tone of feeling stood connected with the production of that which was needed. As an illustration, take the old-fashioned way of lighting a candle. If you have a coal of fire and blow gently, there will always come a little flame on the coal, and you can light your candle with it; but if a man should take the coal and give a sudden and violent puff, he would blow out the light of the coal and the candle too. Gentle feeling will often stand more nearly connected with the inception of deep emotion than more intense and overpowering agitation will.

Another thing: You can never make people feel by scolding them because they don't feel. You can never move anybody by saying, "Feel!" Feeling is just as much a product of cause as anything else in the world. I could sit down before a piano and say, "A, come forth"; and it won't. But if I put my finger on

the key it will, and that is the only way to make it. The human soul is like a harp; one has but to put his hand to a chord and it will vibrate to his touch, according as he knows how. It is the knowing how that you are to acquire. It is the very business that you are going out into the world for; it is to understand human nature so that you can touch the chords of feeling.

HOW FEELING IS DEVELOPED.

In general, feeling results from the presentation of some fact or truth that has a relation to the particular feeling you wish to produce. If I wanted to make you weep, I would not tell you an amusing story; I would, if I wanted to make you laugh, and that story had a relation to laughing. If I wished to make you weep, I would tell you some pathetic incident, the truth embodied in which had some sympathetic relation to feeling. Charge yourself with this: "If these people are to feel, I, as the minister of the Holy Ghost, am to be the cause of it by applying to their minds such treatment, such thoughts, as stand connected with the production of feeling." If they do not feel, it is because you do not play well. If they do feel, it is because you are a master of your business, — *quoad hoc.*

USELESSNESS OF MERE EXHORTATION.

So, then, here is where you come to the folly of exhortation, — men exhorting each other day after day, continually, to "feeling," to "duty," without presenting any new expression, without filling the mind or the imagination, without laying in fuel which is to kindle

into light and warmth. Mere exhortation is as if a man should go down the street saying, "O money, money, money, come to me, come to me!" No, it will not come to him thus. Or as if a man should go to his studies and invoke mathematics; that does not come by invocation. As you gain other things by playing the keys that produce the desired effects, so you must do with every step that you gain in a meeting. Men are so many instruments, and you are a skillful player; and you will have success just as the Spirit of God dwelling in you kindles your soul to that power, to that perception of truth, to that sympathy with it, to that knowledge of men; for the sense of God brings the sense of human nature. They both lie in the same plane, and he that has one will be very apt to have the other. They train together. And if you have the power of producing the sympathetic feeling, it will be simply by applying the known causes of that effect. Nothing is so barren, nothing so unprofitable, as *urging* men to feel, when the shorter way is to *make* them feel.

FLIES IN THE OINTMENT.

Among the hindrances, I must mention the moths and millers that will be sure to fly around your candle just as soon as you have it lighted. It is almost impossible that a meeting should have any life or power in it, or any degree of freedom, without producing some very disagreeable results. I have had my cross to bear in this matter. It seemed as though I never was to be left without a thorn in the flesh, without somebody to disturb almost every prayer-meeting. Well, I don't know why a prayer-meeting should be an excep-

tion to every other part of life. Perfection does n't belong here. Everything is mixed. Everything sweet has its bitter, every rose its thorn, and every prayer-meeting its "bummer." And you must make up your mind to it. You must not be too fastidious, or too easily thrown off your guard. To give you a biographical sketch of all the illustrious persons who have spoiled prayer-meetings for me would keep you here till midnight. I have one now in my mind who used occasionally to utter as brilliant and apposite sentences as I ever heard, and yet I never heard him make an address in the world that he did not mar and injure the meeting. It was the occasional flash that was good, but the ordinary statements that he made were inconceivably bad. I recollect once a meeting seemed almost spoiled, — if anything could spoil it; a good meeting you never can spoil, when it has real heart and stamina to it. But I recollect one of my sons of vexation, when a meeting had turned on the love of Christ, and especially the sympathy of Christ with those that are feeble and striving to come to a higher life under manifold difficulties, and upon the great consolation and encouragement there is in persevering, in the knowledge that the whole atmosphere above you is sympathetic in Christ Jesus. Just at the end, after I had taken my hymn-book to give out the closing hymn, thinking I had got that meeting safe out of the reach of everybody, — this man gets up and says, "Why, brethren," — he had very red hair, — "I sometimes feel that I could put even my red head in Jesus' bosom!" Well, what could you do? Nobody after that could take up the thread of discourse, and you could not go back and mold the meeting over again, — what could you do?

By the grace of God, nothing; a very patient, a very meek *nothing*.

It is a good idea, therefore, to build your meetings out of such manful stuff, and to have such a spirit of courage inspired in your people that they won't be thrown off their guard by infelicities of this kind; to have your meetings so tough that they won't be hurt by any such little infliction as that. I had an old white-headed man, — I never knew his name, nor cared to, — but whenever there was a little fervor he came in. I remember a horse which my father bought, and which ran away the first day he was put in the chaise. The next day he was sold to a stage-company, and I rode behind him down to Bethlehem the first time he was put on the wheel. He carried the whole stage that day; he carried it out of the road once in a while, and from one side to the other, with such a burst that it seemed as though he would sweep everything before him. He carried the stage all the way down. This white-haired old man was like that horse; he would take the meeting in his teeth, and rush away with it in this direction and in that direction, and you never knew where you were! He had fervor, and his prayers had a perfect Gulf Stream in them both for speed and heat. For a few meetings I thought I had got a great auxiliary; but, after a few more, I found that I had a shark in the net, and that it was anything but edifying.

I had another of these men to whom is committed the cultivation of the perseverance of the saints; he would talk half an hour, and not get out a dozen sentences. He would get up and exhort young men in a most painfully slow manner, and you can imagine the

precious time of the meeting going. Then I had another man who used to assume a most oratorical position, and, introducing a little narrative, have everybody on the tiptoe of expectation. But it all went out in puff; there was nothing of it, no *nub* to it, no anything. He would do that at almost every meeting, and sit down with an air, and wipe his mouth, as if he had been Demosthenes.

Now, what are you going to do with such men? You must do exactly as we boys used to do when we were fishing off Cragie's Bridge in Boston. We could n't help it, — in spite of everything we could do, the little perch would steal the bait, and the big fish would n't get a chance at the hook. We fished through thick and thin; we renewed the bait and kept fishing, and caught what big ones we could, and let the little perch bite. You must do the same, in the main. You must bear it; but you must have your meeting tempered to survive such things.

DO NOT BE FASTIDIOUS.

This I may say also in regard to another point, — fastidiousness with respect to the form of that which is said by men who have good sense and good feeling at the bottom, but not the art of polite delivery. People may say, "Oh, I wish nobody would speak but the pastor; there is some comfort in hearing him speak; but when Mr. So-and-so gets up, what he says is well enough, but, dear me! what grammar!" Now, fastidiousness is one of the devil's imps that he sends to preside in prayer-meetings. The moment your grammar and your literature are a stronger relish to you than the substance of the thought or the feeling of an

honest man, that very moment there is mischief in the room; you will shut off the unpracticed. Brethren, a man may get up, and what he says may be said in the most oratorical manner, and may come home to your heart and imagination, and comfort you, and yet it will not do the church one half so much good as to hear a new man that never spoke, a young man, who shakes on his feet, to whom it is a great effort to rise, and who makes a stammering speech, in which, however, appears his adhesion to Christ, or his love for the cause, or some feature in his history. The speaking of that new man, who speaks so poorly, is worth more to the church than the finest effort ever made by an old member. You have found another man, you have got some more material. It is more important to rescue a man from outside, and bring him in, and build him up in the church, than it is to have gifts exercised by those that are already in it. You are sure of them; they are safe. But the church *grows* by the addition of just such new men.

THE NEED OF CATHOLICITY.

Prayer-meetings, too, are apt to run in particular lines. You must make them catholic and broad. No prayer-meeting is truly Christian in the largest sense, that is not broad enough to have any theme discussed or alluded to in it, which, under God's providence, exercises the hearts of any of his people. There are persons that come to my prayer-meeting to talk perfectionism. I believe in it, though I think it is adjourned until after the present sphere. But I am never afraid that my folks are going to get too perfect.

There are some thoughts lying in that direction that are worthy of our hearing; for, if that subject does not rest on a philosophical basis, still it is on a side where we certainly need to hear much. I let them talk. I encourage them to come. There are some persons who do not believe in falling from grace; but if there is a brother who does, and who thinks he has fallen from grace, and wants to talk about it, I just let him bring it out. If there is any joy, any sorrow, any doubt or any scepticism; if there is any disbelieving what you said last Sunday in your sermon; if there is any disposition, not combative, but really manly and kind, to traverse any of your positions, — get it out. Young men, become very much attached to those who do not like you. Those who do, will be your worst enemies generally; they won't tell you your faults. They will let you grow up into a little god; they will let you be the lump of sugar which all the brothers and sisters will stir around in the sweet cup of their meetings; and "our beloved pastor," and "what our dear brother has said," and all those little endearing phrases, will pass around, that do not do you half as much good as the rough-hewing of some old man or young man given to plain speaking. It may be hard to take; but manliness, broadness, versatility, largeness, all-sidedness, — these are in the meeting; get them out! When, therefore, things are brought in that seem inchoate, — they may be so, and yet may answer a purpose. Anything in the world but regulation dullness in a prayer-meeting. Have life! Mistakes? Meetings can bear mistakes. Misproportions? Meetings can bear misproportions. In the statement

of views, it is not necessary that everything should always be orthodox. Men forget in ten minutes. As whales take in vast volumes of water and spurt it out, but keep the animalculæ in it for their food, so four fifths of our preaching is all squirted out again! But there are a few things that remain with everybody. In a Christian community and a trained church there is a kind of appropriating instinct; and the carefulness, the excessive caution, that men employ, it seems to me, is on the side of effeminacy, not on the side of large, manly strength, which has in itself safety and power and godliness.

BEGIN AND END PROMPTLY.

I have spoken thus far of the Hindrances; now a few words on the Helps.

Let all prayer-meetings begin with very great promptness. No matter if there is not another person in the room; begin and sing yourself. I should say that among the mechanical helps in prayer-meetings are brevity, and prompt beginning and ending at the time appointed. In general, short meetings, half-hour prayer-meetings, are better than those an hour long. An hour meeting is incomparably better than one of an hour and a half, except in very extraordinary circumstances. An hour is the average length. I am very particular to begin at the moment appointed, and to end within the hour. It is not once in ten times that I will suffer it to go over that period, and then only because there is something special or unusual Do not let a meeting *drag*.

CULTIVATE THE SOCIAL ELEMENT.

Next, no prayer-meeting is good that has not a current to it, that has not momentum. Keep the people doing something. Suppose that every time you go into a prayer-meeting you walk up in a very solemn way, looking at nobody and speaking to nobody. You sit down in your chair, and open the Bible, and read a whole chapter that may have twenty different thoughts and subjects in it, with no earthly reason of adaptation except that chapters are generally read before meetings. Then you make a prayer, which is good enough in its way, but nothing special; then you sing a hymn, and then you call on Deacon So-and-so to make a prayer, and then you sing another hymn, and then say, "Brethren, the meeting is thrown open; if anybody has anything to say, let him speak on." Then comes the great pause, and as the brethren have nothing more to say, "We will close with such a hymn," and that is the end of the prayer-meeting. Now, suppose instead of that, when a minister comes into his prayer-meeting, he speaks to the folks at the door, shakes hands with the little children that are there, shows himself among the people, and goes naturally about, familiarly, genially, without a bit of the priest about him, the "awful responsibility" air all gone, — why, people's minds are limber! they spring up! When you come into a prayer-meeting room, you are all exhorted to feel that you are coming into the presence of God. Well, is God a scarecrow? Is God a devouring fire to the Christian? Was that the effect that Christ's presence produced when he came into a crowd? As I read it, when

he came anywhere, there was sunshine. Everybody dropped everything else and rushed to him. There was an almost audacious familiarity with him. Everybody seemed to have a new impetus in life; people's blood went tingling through their bodies at the very sight of him. His was a joy-inspiring, as well as a conscience-piercing, presence and nature. When you put a pressure of the kind I have just mentioned upon people, you do not inspire veneration, but you do repress all those genial, tender, and sympathetic feelings out of which a social meeting is to derive its forces. So, in coming into your meeting, make it as social as you possibly can.

SMALL ROOMS THE BEST.

In general, meetings are held in rooms too large for them. A chamber prayer-meeting is better than a prayer-meeting in a large room, by reason of the very force of contiguity. But if only a large room can be had, and only a few people come, gather the few together in clusters so that they are near to each other; then, in opening the meeting, have it arranged in your own mind in such a way that service shall follow service with rapidity, — short prayers, short hymns, and *movement*, momentum. Never let there be a moment's pause; be yourself ready to fill the gap if others do not; push the meeting right through, from beginning to end. There is a great deal arising from the momentum which a meeting generates.

LET THERE BE VARIETY.

There is no earthly reason why prayer-meetings should be twice alike, — I mean in form. Suppose that one week it is a prayer and conference meeting; that is to say, prayer predominating, and conference taking the minor part. The next week let it be just the reverse, — conference predominating, and prayer being comparatively in the minority. Then, the next week, let it be a praise meeting. What is that? A meeting in which most of the time is filled up with singing, and not with either prayer or conference. Make the most of your materials in their diversity. Sometimes you will draw out one side of your congregation, and sometimes another side. Study to have ever something different; not necessarily marked out and prescribed with authority, so that it must inevitably be just that, without any spontaneity in the meeting; but be prepared to make the meeting, unless the meeting makes itself.

IMPORTANCE OF SINGING.

In doing this, singing is of transcendent importance. Persons say, "What shall I do in a prayer-meeting if I have nobody that knows how to speak?" Sing a hymn. "Well, suppose I have nobody that knows how to pray, how shall I get along with that?" Sing a hymn. "Well, but suppose I have no persons that have any of the gifts of sympathy, how shall I touch them?" Through hymns. "Suppose I am myself slow of speech?" Give out hymns. There is not a single feeling from the top to the bottom of human nature that has not been struck a thousand times by

singing hymns. Hymns have this peculiarity, that they are the most glowing inspirations which God gives to his people in these later days, crystallized and preserved, so that they may by sympathy impart the feeling which they express. As long as a man has a good hymn-book and knowledge how to use it, there is no reason why a meeting should not be thoroughly edifying and good.

SUMMING UP.

One word in closing. All these multitudinous details that I have mentioned, you perhaps may not carry away with you in your memory; but when you go into your respective fields of labor, and one difficulty after another comes up, you may then possibly remember these suggestions. I would sum them all up in this: Do not be discouraged because your field is hard and the people scattered, because the caliber of your people is small, because the meetings are dull and hard, because the work is severe. Your reward will be in proportion to your skill and your endurance. Remember, a prayer-meeting develops piety under the influence of *social enthusiasm*, and there is in social enthusiasm a power that no man can imagine who has not tried it.

Oh, what waste there is! What unused power there is in the social relations of men in churches that is hardly suspected, and that never comes out except in times of revival! And then it is set down to the credit of "the Divine Spirit"; as if that did not abide in men ever and always! Why is it that, when I use guano, I get good crops? "Why, that is the Divine

Providence," men say. Divine Providence! Yes; and every time you use guano, Divine Providence will do the same thing. And when there is a revival, that is, when you are awake, and when your life is real and full and joyous, and you have liberty of expression, then you will know that meetings may mount up into rapture. You have such power and blessedness in them that you get the testimony of God to a secret power which you may develop all the year round. The mainspring of the prayer-meeting must always be the *social element*, the subtle power of sympathy. Work for that, and by God's blessing you will work a right end.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Suppose you give out a hymn, and there is nobody to sing it?

MR. BEECHER. — Sing yourself.

Q. But suppose you cannot?

MR. BEECHER. — That is a point on which I ought to have spoken. Every minister who is ordained in the Roman Catholic Church is obliged to know music. It is a part of the qualification of the priesthood in that church, and it ought to be so in our churches. When you have got through examining a man on all didactic theology, let him sing. It is far more important with us than it is in the hierarchical church, for there the minister intones, and does not sing; but *you* have to sing. When you get to the point where bad rhetoric and bad music meet, there is intoning. Now, in all new settlements, in visiting the sick you will be expected to sing; in your prayer-meetings you will have to "set the tune." If you haven't learned how to

sing, and are going West, or into new settlements, let one of the first things you learn be how to "raise" a tune. And, if you can't sing, "make a joyful noise."

Q. How as to attitudes in prayer, whether in the pulpit or the prayer-meeting?

Mr. Beecher. — It is purely a matter of choice. Some persons in the pulpit are trained to pray standing, — I have been. I find it is natural to me. Others — and almost always in the Methodist Church — kneel for prayers; but it would be very awkward for me. I do not know that there is any advantage in one attitude over the other. The best prayer-meetings I ever had in my early parishes were those that came along after I had got through with the main one. That is, when we had finished the regulation prayer-meeting, and there was something that interested the folks, and we got around the stove, a dozen or fifteen of us, and fell to talking about something. Some of those who were not so much interested stood off on the edge, and were looking over the hymn-book and humming a tune. Then we all joined, and sang the tune, and thus we had a meeting. Time and again they have said, "*Now* we have had our meeting." The simple reason of it was, we had had the real, free, spontaneous, social elements, kindling religious fervor and feeling.

Now, in prayer, if a man wants to stand, let him stand, if that be natural to him. I suspect that the difference between kneeling and standing is not so great but that good prayers get up there about alike.

Q. What about the choice of subjects for remarks?

Mr. Beecher.— Of course, there are all those subjects

that belong to the foundation of Christian experience and Christian character; but then, the providence of God is choosing subjects for you all the while, in your village, in your town, — the festivities in this family, the funeral ceremonies in that family, the misfortunes of this brother, the success of that one, the going out of a young man to preach or to college, the children and the mortality among them, the losses of men. For instance, if I had a prayer-meeting here in certain circles, I would make the failure of a banking-house the subject of a prayer-meeting, and the text, "Lay up your treasures in heaven, where moth or rust cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal." Such themes, things that people were feeling before they came into meeting, things that they really want some comfort or some light about, — those are the things from which you can get a religious influence. Sometimes they will take you out of the sphere of strictly religious themes, but they will not be less profitable on that account. It is said, we ought not to introduce secular topics into the church. I say, take any secular topic you can find, and bring it into the church, and make it redolent of Christian ethics, and then carry it out again into its place. If you bring a thing into the church, and then turn it out of doors again, it goes out with a new coat on.

Q. What do you say in reference to the three-minute rule for prayers in prayer-meeting?

Mr. Beecher. — It is like all mere mechanical rules; it answers a good purpose to begin with, but I should slack off all such rules just as soon as the people got the idea in their heads. You must remember you have

got an intelligent people. Do not despise common folks. You can manage an average American audience; you can make them learn to do almost anything. Just throw yourself upon them; give them to understand that you expect good judgment of them. I remember at a camp-meeting in Logansport, Indiana, on a Sunday, there were five thousand people present, and no police. The rule out there is to have camp-meetings amply policed. I got up in the desk and said, "Friends, there are five thousand of you here to-day; it is very hot and dusty, there is very little water, the children will be fretful, mothers may be tired, it is feared that there may be trouble. Now we have n't a single watchman or policeman on this ground. If there is good order here to-day, you will have to keep it." I had no occasion to say another word. Everybody took care of himself. In a prayer-meeting it is pretty easy to let them understand that they must be short; a little management will bring them around, and they will be short, and fervent, and to the point.

When you go into a new field, — a Sunday-school convention, for instance, — and have to start with raw material, then it is that you need rules for three-minute prayers and speeches, and sometimes they will be shorter than three minutes. I don't think it took the publican three minutes to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" and yet it was an admirable prayer.

Q. Would you advise the ladies to speak and pray?

Mr. Beecher. — I would.

Q. Suppose they would n't do it?

Mr. Beecher. — That is just my case exactly. I bear their silence.

Q. What do you think of the custom of announcing subjects beforehand?

MR. BEECHER. — I don't like it. I think there may be exceptional cases. During all my ministry I have refused with the utmost obstinacy to tell what I was going to preach on, even when it was going to be a very important subject. If you advertise when you are going to preach something that is worth hearing, people will take it for granted that, when you do not advertise, your preaching is to be all filling up. It will be well to make a few rules like this: If it is a wet day, do your very best; make your wet-day sermons better than any other, even if it kills you. And never repeat them, no matter how much those who were not there may want to hear them. If you have an important subject, never advertise it; and the result will be that people will say, "If you get those fine sermons, you must go all the time, and take what he gives you." It will produce the tendency to go always.

The gentleman who asked the last question said: "My question was misunderstood. It was with reference to announcing a subject in the prayer-meeting, so that people may have an opportunity to think about it."

MR. BEECHER. — I beg pardon. Sometimes I should do it, and sometimes I should not. I should never do twice alike if I could help it.

Q. You speak about filling up the gaps and having no pauses. Might not sometimes silent prayers of a minute or two have a good effect?

MR. BEECHER. — O yes, if you do it on purpose. This makes a great difference. When Randolph was asked by a man, "Mr. Randolph, how is it that you con-

trive such pauses in your discourses? They are tremendously effective." "Pauses?" said Mr. Randolph; "I pause because I have nothing to say." The difficulty in prayer-meetings is, that those pauses are because people have nothing to say, and the effect is tremendous, — but in the wrong direction.

Q. Would you always read a passage from the Scriptures in opening a prayer-meeting?

Mr. Beecher. — No, I should not. I very seldom open my prayer-meetings in that way. I had far rather bring it in from time to time. The Scripture, you know, is an encyclopedia. If a man should sit down and read an encyclopedia page by page, without any regard to subject or occasion, he would do what is often done in reading the Bible. If I have any theme that I want to speak upon, I make up my mind just about what group of passages bear on the matter I am to take in hand. I find my place, and lay the Bible down close by, and don't let the folks know I am going to use it. I start the meeting and throw out that topic; and if it takes, and is congenial, and the audience open here and there and express themselves, and the prayers run in that channel, I can take up my Bible, and say, "Brethren, here, see what is said here"; and I read those passages I had selected, and let them observe how they illustrate, corroborate, or refute, as the case may be.

Q. Would you call upon the young people of your meeting who may want to speak, but are diffident?

Mr. Beecher. — I would. It is a good thing for them to have an exercise-meeting of their own where, among

themselves, they can break down bashfulness and build up confidence, familiarity; and then, in easy and gentle methods, let them also exercise their gifts in the larger meetings.

Q. Would you generally lead your own prayer-meeting, as pastor?

MR. BEECHER. — I think that every pastor ought to lead one prayer-meeting a week in his church, no matter how many others there are. It is his drill-meeting. It is the time when he goes into the very Holy of Holies, among his people. It is the time above all others when he lays his hand on the very palpitating heart of his people. He cannot afford, for his own sake as a preacher, nor for that of the work in the church, not to be present every week, and be in the very heart of it.

Q. Do you speak generally before the meetings, or during them?

MR. BEECHER. — Sometimes one, sometimes the other. If people come in and seem to have no spirit or fire, I usually open with the first prayer myself, especially when my heart is full, and bring them into kindling sympathy with me, and through me with God. Or, at other times, if I see signs of interest and feeling, I let them lead off, sometimes let them introduce the topic; and, if there is occasion, I close the meeting myself with prayer, so as to sum up all the facts and give them the last direction. The rule should be, never use any one method all the time.

V.

RELATIONS OF MUSIC TO WORSHIP.

MUSIC is one of the most important auxiliaries of the preacher. I do not hold those things alone to be auxiliary which have an apparent and an immediate bearing on the sermon as such; but, as I have before explained to you, the sermon is only one element of the whole movement, and the preacher should develop the course in a kind of unity, the sermon being a constituent part, and perhaps the central and the grand element. Music comes, I think, in its capacity of doing good, next to preaching. Its power is as yet a thing undeveloped. Consider, for instance, what our impressions were as to the availability of music in the Sunday-school twenty-five or thirty years ago, and compare the Sunday-schools of to-day with those of that period. What would our schools be, if you should drop out of them bodily the music of the schools? They would almost dissolve and vanish. It is the invisible chain which holds them together and animates them; and there is a power in music to reach, to direct, to comfort the feelings of the Christian's heart, which is, comparatively speaking, yet

undreamed of. In the churches where liturgical forms prevail, it becomes necessary that the minister, as an administrator, should have some degree of consideration for music, without which it is almost impossible to render the liturgical service; but in those churches which disallow a service and make everything extemporaneous, how seldom do we find a man who is able in preaching, and at the same time considerate and earnest and zealous on the subject of music! The complaint which I hear from conductors of music is, that there is no person in the congregation so indifferent to the cultivation of music as the minister. Now and then there is an exception; but generally the minister is glad to have a conductor who will take the whole responsibility from his shoulders; and then, so that there be quiet in the choir and no disturbance in the congregation, he does not trouble himself any more about the matter.

THE MINISTER'S DUTY.

Now, every minister not only should be able upon occasion to conduct musical service, but he should make it a part of his cure, his anxiety in the development of the religious life of his congregation, to have music not only good, but increasingly good; and he should devote his time and energy to it, just as he would to the development of any topic for discourse. Music is itself an agent in affecting, not so much the understanding, as that part of man's nature which the sermon usually leaves comparatively barren. Now, it is true of the Roman service, and to a great extent of the Episcopal service, that it touches the devout imagination; that it reaches

toward, if it does not actually inspire, veneration and awe; that it does feel for the chords whose response is worship. Nothing is more frequent, therefore, than to see persons who have been brought up in the Quaker faith, or the plain faith of our fathers, and their plainer worship, their barren worship almost, going over to those churches, and explaining it not on doctrinal grounds, or grounds of ecclesiastical affinity, but simply that they feel the need of a worshiping element, which is provided for them there, and not with us. Indeed, if I were to say what was the marked, the characteristic, fault of congregational churches, whether Baptist, or Presbyterian, or Congregational, I should say it was the almost entire non-provision for the element of worship. There is nothing in their economy that provides for it to any considerable extent. It depends upon good fortune whether you have a pastor who has a natural genius for devotion. If you have not, there is no other provision for it; nor is there any source within our reach from which it can be derived, aside from the mere emotion of the man who conducts the public worship.

MUSIC. THE PREACHER'S PRIME MINISTER.

There is no instrumentality that I know of, except that of music. It is the function of music to begin at the point at which the sermon ends. That instructs, that incites to emotion through the reason. Now comes music, following it up and inciting to emotion through the imagination, through the taste, through the feelings; and it takes the same truths which may have been expressed dogmatically. The truths which

have taken on intellectual forms, and satisfied all that part of the mind, are now rendered substantial by song, and fill up and satisfy all the other demands of the mind, making a round and complete work. It is very rare that, in any one discourse or in any day's discoursing, a man is so gifted as to be able to reach through the reason to the great foundation chords of feeling in the human soul. It is very rare that a man gets through a day in giving out well-selected hymns, without reaching those chords through the spiritual songs, if they are rightly administered. And in our churches, above all others, this is necessary, in order to mend that barrenness, that want of provision for the æsthetic feeling, the fancy and the imagination and the more facile emotions, which are not provided for by any framework furnished to the preacher, and which, according to his various abilities and endowments or moods, circumstances may or may not have partially provided for in him. But, if he were a Shakespeare, it is impossible for any man living, twice a day for fifty-two Sabbaths of the year, to stand with such plenary power and originality as to meet all those wants of men himself, unsuccored and unhelped. And his auxiliary, if he knows the provision made for him, his grand auxiliary, the prime minister of the preacher, is music.

CHURCH MUSIC, — THE ORGAN.

I shall speak, then, of music in the church, in social relations, in the prayer-meeting. As to church music, there first arises the question of instrumental music. Where instrumental music is introduced for the pur-

pose, for instance, of giving tone and time, — where it is a mere auxiliary of that kind, it is not without its uses. Even so poor as are the country provisions of flute, violin, and bass-viol, they are not to be despised. There is great help in them. But now, in the growing intelligence and taste and wealth of our country, the old prejudices against instrumental music having for the most part quite died out, the organ is distinctively the instrument which is employed in all our churches. And, happily, we now have so many organ-builders, and the competition is such, that the church must be very poor that cannot provide for itself an organ in some degree commensurate with its actual wants. I would not be thought unduly enthusiastic in speaking of this instrument, which I look upon as an historian looks upon a great nation that through a thousand years has been developed by providential events and eductions, until it has reached a place in which it stands manifestly a prime, a divine power in the world. I look upon the history and the development of the organ for Christian uses as a sublime instance of the guiding hand of God's providence. It is the most complex of all instruments, it is the most harmonious of all, it is the grandest of all. Beginning far back, growing as things grow which have great and final uses, growing little by little, it has come now to stand, I think, immeasurably, transcendently, above every other instrument, and not only that, but above every combination of instruments: for, although you may obtain certain effects, certain movements, and a kind of lifelike elasticity from orchestral performances; although there are sinuous and arrowy elements in them, and there

is a certain spirit of personal enthusiasm inspired by them, where they are carried to a very high extent of culture, as in those foreign bands that visited us last season for the Boston Jubilee, or in our own Thomas's orchestra; although, in rare exceptions, you can combine instruments in such a way as to do some things which the organ cannot do, — yet the finest orchestra that ever stood on earth, compared on the whole with the organ, is manifestly its inferior. No orchestra that ever existed had the breadth, the majesty, the grandeur, that belong to this prince of instruments. It is true that now, by reason of comparatively recent improvements in the construction of the organ, it can be played as rapidly as the piano can, but only its upper or what are called its "fancy" stops will bear any such handling as that. For the organ means majesty; it means grandeur. It means sweetness, to be sure, but it is sweetness in power, like the bubbling crests of waves on the ocean. Whatever it has of sweetness, of fineness, or of delicacy, there is, moreover, an under-power that is like the sea itself. And I thank God a thousand times a year, when I see how many things taste and the social elements have stolen from religion, and I turn to this one solitary exception and know that there is left to religion, as peculiarly its own, at least the organ, — the grandest thing that ever was thought of or combined in human ingenuity. Running through all the various qualities of tone, as soft and as sweet as the song-sparrow (which is the sweetest bird that sings), and in its complexity rising through all gradations, imitating almost everything that is known of sounds on earth, it expresses at last the very thun-

der and the earthquake, and almost the final trumpet itself!

FUNCTION OF THE ORGAN, — THE OPENING.

What, then, has the organ to do in the church? Usually, when we enter churches, we are greeted at once with the sound of the organ. What is the first thing ideally? Under the hand of a master who is in sympathy with the ends and the economy of the church, what is the prime function of the organ? A great many of you will say, "I don't know exactly what. It is the custom always to play when the people are coming into church, or to begin the service with the organ." What for? Why do they begin the service with the organ? What uses do you yourselves conceive in it? I will tell you what I think about it. I think that when the family comes to church, having been hurried and flurried in getting the children ready, — when the little brood have been looked after, and the five or the six are combed and curled and hooked and shoed, and all got in order, the house shut up and secure, and the little throng safely housed in the pew, — the mind all fluttered with those sweet domestic cares, — it is a great relief if something can quietly, imperceptibly, smooth those cares away. Some come from their houses, heavy with the lassitude of oversleeping on Saturday night and Sunday morning. Having been excessively pressed during the week, they get up drowsy and sleepy, eat their nine o'clock or ten o'clock breakfast, come away to church, and are spent. There is nothing in them. Others come in, frivolous and gay and genial.

If there were any such thing possible as that, the moment they passed the threshold, you could roll down a curtain behind them, so that all the world should disappear and be forgotten, and so that care should fall behind, and dullness and weariness and sorrow, and all doubts and all fears, should vanish, — if it were possible to make the door of the cathedral or of the church a screen through which should come the fresh, living, immortal soul, but none of its drudgeries or cares, how blessed would that be!

Now, that is what the organ undertakes, or should undertake, to do. It should take up the congregation and wash them clean in sound. It should disperse all these secular and worldly impressions, associations, thoughts, and feelings, and lift them up into the æsthetic, — the imaginative. "Very well; but is that worship? is that religion?" No, but it is that state of mind out of which comes, more easily than from any other, the next stage, of positive religious feeling. When a congregation are set free from the entanglements and burdens of the world, and brought into the higher realms of imagination, fancy, and feeling, they are ready for the plastic touch, they are ready to listen, to take part indeed. If an organ be well played in the beginning, as soon as its tones cease, the congregation is reasonably prepared to join with the choir in the singing of the opening hymn or anthem.

THE HYMN ACCOMPANIMENT.

Next to this is its accompanying power. I am accustomed to think of a congregation with an organ as of a fleet of boats in the harbor, or on the waters.

The organ is the flood, and the people are the boats; and they are buoyed up and carried along upon its current as boats are borne upon the depths of the sea. So, aside from mere musical reasons, there is this *power* that comes upon people, that encircles them, that fills them, — this great, mighty ocean-tone; and that helps them to sing.

Then, besides, comes the interlude. Now, the interlude is an echo, or a prophecy, or both. If it be an echo, it attempts to render in pure musical sound the dominant thought of the stanza that went before. If it be a prophecy, it sees what is coming, and prepares the way for it, and brings the devotional congregation to the next stanza.* And if it be in the hands of a Christian man, and a man of musical genius, it may help much. Otherwise, it is a mere noisy gap between two verses, a sprawl sometimes, an awful racket of chords, a sort of running up stairs and tumbling down again. Not one organist in ten seems to have the slightest idea why an interlude should be played. John Zundel† knows. I wish John Zundel had a hundred thousand children, and every one was another John Zundel. I speak thus, not to have his name go

* As to the class of music suitable for the organ, Mr. Beecher said that there was an ample supply of ecclesiastical music, that had been accumulating for four or five hundred years, and was sufficient for all church requirements. But there is no objection to what is called "secular" music, if it be in its nature devotion-breathing. For example, much of the music of Mendelssohn and of Mozart, almost all that of Von Weber and of Beethoven, can be adapted to the church. But music which is frivolous, which recalls the waltz and the opera, is a desecration.

† The able, and now venerable, organist of Plymouth Church.

out; but to him music means worship, and the organ means religion. He is the man who told me, when he was converted, that he "prayed just as other people did now." "Why," said I, "what do you mean?" Said he, "I speak my prayers out to God." "Well, how did you always do?" "I always played them on the piano before," said he. Such was his habit. So long had he been trained, that what words are to us notes were to him; and he expressed every thought and every feeling that he had upon the instrument. And you would think he did it yet, if you heard him in his inspired moments upon the organ. It has brought tears to my eyes a hundred times; I have gone in jaded and unhearted, and have been caught up by him and lifted so that I saw the flash of the gates! I have been comforted; I have been helped. And if I have preached to him and helped him, — and I know I have, — he has preached to me and helped me; and he knows not, and never will know, how much.

THE CLOSING VOLUNTARY.

If a person has been listening to a discourse which has stirred up the conscience, and awakened fear, and left the soul in a distressed state, there is a way of giving relief without discharging the feeling. There is in music a power of lifting the soul towards the great music-land. If persons in the congregation are going out in a state of stricture, — or of rapture of mind, even, — whichever way, the organ, by sympathy or by contrast, can dismiss them into the world, having, as it were, liquified the sermon, and poured it out into the very atmosphere.

ORGANISTS.

Now, the pity of this matter is that ministers care so little about it, and persons in the church know so little about it, that organists do pretty much as they have a mind to. Nobody criticises them, nobody teaches them. There is no organ school; there are no masters who are held in such respect that their word is law. There are admirable men presiding at the organ, few and far between; but, intermediately, we are overrun with a vast number of persons who play without reason, without heart, without soul, and with no sort of religious foundation. The only thing they think of is that they have to play so many pieces and at such points in the service, for that is the way the thing is arranged. And so they play; and this magnificent instrument, that has in it such power, such impassioned eloquence, such soul-stirring influences, is too often neglected and abused in the hands of miserable musical miscreants.

First come mere musicians. They play for science, for reputation, and that is all. They think no more about it. That would be as if the minister were thinking of grammar and rhetoric and personal popularity, and nothing else. For preaching is simply a means to an end, and the sermon is a mere tool, an instrument, and the preacher but a servant. God's work is the thing to be done. I care not if the player be Beethoven and the organ be the most magnificent that ever was constructed; they are both servants, and their glory is subordination. They are to serve God in the thoughts, the feelings, the fancies, and the affections of his poor little children, of his servants, of all that are

in the congregation. How many are inspired with any such conception as this? And here come in the musical monkeys, dancing on their organ, playing up and playing down, rattling all sorts of waltzes, with a long leg stretched out here and there to make it sound like Sunday music.

TRUE ORGAN MUSIC.

This leads me to speak a word in reference to the proper music for the organ. There need be no recourse to any other than ecclesiastical music, because the treasury of organ music is very rich. There has been a line of masters for four or five hundred years, who have been contributing to the riches of the world in the music adapted to this noblest of all instruments. There are yet a great many contributors to it. No man need lack preludes, no man need lack afterpieces, or even interludes. Not only themes, but methods of treatment, abound. The world is rich in them for every young musician. Still, there is no objection to the introduction into the church services of much of that which is called secular music, provided it be, in its nature, devotion-breathing. There is very little that Von Weber ever wrote that is not fit, in its nature and spirit, for the church. Much of Mendelssohn's music, although written for secular occasions, is also spiritual. And I think you could find nothing in Beethoven, from beginning to end, that would not befit the church, if it were re-adapted. So with much of Mozart's music, some of Rossini's, and many others.

But there is a great deal of music that is not simply gay, it is frisky. It is even frivolous. The introduc-

tion of such music into church, just because it happens to be in vogue; the trick of beginning with a broad musical opening and then letting people hear, tinkling and trickling along down, some air from an opera, — just a little of it, to tickle the fancy, — all covered up, as they imagine, by the bass or by the other parts; the foolery of playing in the house of God the waltzes that the young folks danced to, perhaps, but a night or two ago, or the things which they have heard in opera during the week, or any other fashionable music of the day, — this is a desecration; it is dishonoring a man's own profession; it is dishonoring the house of God, and a minister ought to be able to know it and to stop it. One of the miseries of a ministry uneducated in music is, that ministers frequently do not know enough to discern when the music is good and when it is bad. They do not know enough to be the bishop of the organ and the organist, as well as of the congregation.

When, in addition to that library of Lowell Mason's, which I understand has been presented to your library, — and a very noble musical library it is for America, — when you shall have a lectureship founded upon it, so that you shall annually hear lectures upon music, and be properly drilled in it, then, I believe, there will come out from this a generation of men who will understand what music was meant for, whether in the choir, in the organ, in the family, or in the lecture-room.

THE CHOIR.

This leads me to speak of the choir as an assistant in music. The first question that naturally comes up

is, "Is it best to have a choir, or congregational singing?" My reply is, It is best to have a choir *and* congregational singing, — both! When Mr. Zundel once went to play at a little church, he had the whole matter put into his hands, and was requested to develop congregational singing. After a few months, I asked him how he was getting along. "Oh," said he, "there is one element necessary to congregational singing, and that is that you should have a congregation. There are not so many persons in the pews as I have up in my choir, and so you cannot have congregational singing." Now, where that is the case, if you are to have any singing at all, you must have it in the choir.

Then, there is a class of music that may be very edifying, and yet beyond the reach of the congregation; though I have great faith in the capacity of a congregation to learn singing. The choir may edify the congregation with music, certainly on special occasions. Then, in the next place, a choir becomes a kind of multiplex leader. It takes its time and movement from the director or the organist, and gives them out vocally, and the whole congregation tend to follow it. So the choir acts as a leader.

I know it is often said that there is always a quarrel in the choir, and always trouble. Well, there is always a quarrel somewhere in the world. Sometimes it is between the pulpit and the pews, sometimes it is in the pews, or between them, sometimes it is in the choir. It flies about from one place to another. There is always more or less of a disturbance going on, but there does not need to be any quarrel in the choir, if you

will only do one thing, — infuse into the heart of the minister, and get him to infuse into the heart of the congregation, and get the choir itself to understand, that *musical service is religious service.*

Lowell Mason used always to open his choir-meetings with prayer, and to talk to the young men and the young women who were with him, as though they had come to prepare themselves to take part in rendering the service of God in the sanctuary. And he so impressed them with this thought, he made them so feel it, that there was never any trouble in his choir; religion crowded it out. There have been in my own choir little "tiffs," occasionally, such as all of you have in your families, but there never has been a quarrel or a serious difficulty. So far from that, I always expect that the persons who come into my choir will, in the course of a year, come also into the church. The feeling of the choir is a ripening feeling, a religious feeling, and almost every member, if not so in the beginning, eventually becomes a communicant at the table of the Lord. Where this is the case, when choirs are leavened with religion and made to feel that their work is religious work, there is no more danger of their quarreling, while thus consciously serving God, than there is of deacons and elders quarreling while performing the service of the Lord in his house.

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.

Now, gentlemen, I am a fanatic about congregational singing, and I should be glad to make you enthusiasts, — as near as that to fanaticism. I hold that a man ought always to be an enthusiast, and that no man is a good

one who has not the capacity of being fanatical in places and on occasions. The whole church ought to sing, because the whole church ought to worship, and there is no other worship provided in our churches but this. To listen to the prayer of him that is most gifted is certainly a help, and a long way toward worshiping; but, after all, no man worships in spirit and in truth who does not take a voluntary and personal part, such as is necessary in singing. I do not believe it is possible for a person to sing our hymns and not worship. I will read you a single hymn. I would like to see the man that could sing this hymn and not feel that he had worshiped. I will call your attention to another thing. A want of proper culture has permitted such irreverence to grow up, that, in the singing or the reading of such a hymn as this, one will be tucking his hat under the seat, or fixing his cane, or placing his umbrella in the corner; or the mother will be arranging the neglected curls or pulling at the collar of her little one; or the sexton will be running around and whispering to this or that deacon to know whether he had better open this window a little more or shut that one a little more. This is all wrong. Hymns are worship, and should be respected as such.

This hymn is one of the closest, most endearing, clinging, yearning prayers to Christ: —

"Thou, O my Jesus, thou didst me
Upon the cross embrace;
For me didst bear the nails and spear,
And manifold disgrace,

"And griefs and torments numberless,
And sweats of agony, —

Yea, death itself, and all for one
Who was thine enemy.

"Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,
Should I not love thee well?
Not for the hope of winning heaven,
Nor of escaping hell;

"Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Nor seeking a reward;
But as thyself hast loved me,
O ever-loving Lord!

"E'en so I love thee, and will love,
And in thy praise will sing;
Solely because thou art my God,
And my eternal King."

Now, if you can sing that, and not cry, — I am sorry for your eyes.

PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

People often wonder why folks come to Plymouth Church so much. I will tell you; it is the singing that brings them there. It is the atmosphere there is in the loving, cheerful, hopeful courage of that congregation in the singing. They get a sermon too, but then it is more the singing, I think, that accounts for the throng. It comforts their souls. I have seen men come into that congregation, — and there are at least twenty-five hundred out of the twenty-seven hundred there that sing, — I have seen them come into that congregation exactly as they would go to Barnum's; because, you know, it is the trick of the papers to represent it as a kind of theatre, or what-not. They would sit down and look all around, watching to see what was going to be done next.

When I arose, they would stare as though they really thought I was going to throw a somersault. I would give out a hymn, and they would still be watching for something that had not come yet, but was coming. The organ would give out the tune, and the congregation begin to sing. These men would rise, and stand in their places, and when the great volume of sound, like the voice of many waters, would break on them, I have seen them first, in a kind of bewilderment, looking all around, up in the galleries, on a sea of books opened, and everybody busy singing. And when they heard such a sound as there was rolling down upon them, or rolling up towards God, I have seen them stand, and, by the second verse, away would go the tears down their cheeks. The hymn fairly overcame them. Better than a sermon, better than any exhortation, — why should it not affect them thus?

HOW TO PROMOTE GENERAL SINGING.

Now, in order to promote congregational singing, you must be in earnest about it. Among the things that you say to yourself must be this: "I will give my whole strength, first to preaching to these people; next, to their social development, by visiting them man by man; and always to the cultivation of devotion and worship among them by sacred song." How shall it be done? Well, preach about it often. Secure the best leadership you can; encourage your people to sing in the family, to sing in all social meetings; let them sing the same hymns often and everywhere. That is to say, when men come into church to sing hymns, they do not want to sing many of the church hymns now used,

— there is very little perfume in them. They may be very beautiful, but they are like the japonica, which is exquisite in form and color, but has no fragrance: Now, hymns that do people good may not be beautiful in construction, and yet they may be full of the associations and experiences of the heart. The tunes that the man heard as a child, around the family altar, the hymns that were sung on Sabbath evenings at home, and that carry with them a part of his own past history, that have treasured up in them sacred memorials of the best part of his life, — those hymns, and the hymns that are sung in the Sunday-schools, should be sung in church. There ought to be but one book in every congregation. Or, if there be two, the second should be but a part of the loaf of the first one broken off, so that the same thing should be sung at home, in the lecture-room, in the Sunday-school, and in the great congregation. Then you will have hymns that come to people, touching them all around: living hymns, filled with their own life. Sing much at home, encourage singing in the day schools, in the household, in the Sunday-school, in the lecture-room. Sing on your way rejoicing; make everybody sing that you can, and keep them singing.

Then, there will be many hesitations and many retrocessions. That is the place for your efforts. Whenever things do not go right, draw up the buckle one hole more and go at them again, and that not only in music, but in everything else. You were put into a church, not to be overcome, but to conquer, to carry your own way, - - that is, when your way and God's ways are consentaneous. The difficulties ought to be

nothing but whetstones to a man, making him sharper and sharper.

FELLOWSHIP AND SONG HELP EACH OTHER.

Let me say one thing more: You never will have congregational singing as long as you have no congregational feeling. Congregational singing will certainly break down the stiffness, the formality, and the exclusive habits of your people, or else the stiffness, and the coldness, and the exclusive habits of your people will prevent or destroy congregational singing. You cannot sing throughout the church, and not develop, subtly, that element of fellowship that gives elasticity and freedom in social intercourse. Now, a congregation that have been trained to go into church and sit down and not look at one another, to go home and not speak to one another, I don't believe can be trained to congregational singing, unless by an extraordinary pressure and process. Fellowship and song are but different developments of the same spirit; and therefore, where you have quarrels unreconciled and persons who do not care for each other, people sitting apart separately, you never will make them sing together, they never will pray together, they never will mingle in any way. And, mark my word, if you wish to make congregational singing easy, everything that you do to bring people together socially, genially, in Christian sympathy, will facilitate it. And if you wish to bring people together genially and socially, teach them to sing, and that will facilitate your purpose. Thus singing and sociality act and react upon each other, in a mutual relation of cause and effect.

THE CHOICE OF HYMNS.

I may speak a word on the subject of the selection of hymns for use in church and in the lecture-room. On what principle should we choose? or is there any principle which should dictate the selection of hymns? None that does not admit of infinite variations. But there are certain general principles. For example, I have always pursued what may be called a psychological plan, and have selected hymns sometimes because they were automatic; they volunteered themselves, and I knew that under such circumstances there was a reason for such hymns, there was something in the air that would make them acceptable, even though I did not know why. I take all such intimations as that; but still there is a general plan, and it is this: If I can bring the congregation, before I come personally to handle them, into a triumphant, jubilant state, a cheerful, hopeful, genial state, my work among them will be made easier by one half than if they were in a very depressed, sad state.

I believe that confession, and self-condemnation, and all that, should be like the whippings we give to our children, — sharp and quick, and soon over. I do not believe in yokes and cloaks and long-continued burdens of depression. I believe that it is a malarial poison to the soul for a man to go long bowed down with a sense of sinfulness, and that it is a vicious method of teaching that brings people into such a state of mind. It is remedial, and therefore medicinal; and to give a man medicine all the time is bad for him. The mind in the natural condition is hopeful, cheerful, trusting,

loving. That is the relation which we sustain to God. We are sons. "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends. The servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth. I admit you to that intimate relation by which I counsel with you and you with me. You know all the secrets of the household; you are my children." And it is a shame for the children of God to go always with downcast heads. When the storm comes, then the grass and the flowers and everything bow down with the weight; but when the sun comes out again, they shake off the raindrops and lift themselves up, and are stronger by reason of the storm. And so it should be with Christian men.

I think, therefore, if you begin with a doleful hymn, supposing that you are going to get your people down, you will get them down so low that you won't get them up again. You will mire them. Therefore all those hymns of depression and of sadness are to be prescribed as a physician prescribes medicine, — in broken doses, and, I think, mostly homœopathic at that. On the other hand, the true Christian state is one of a holy hilarity, a holy courage, a holy familiarity with God. It is the soul lifting itself into its natural, native air, not afraid to look at God with the veil, Christ, between; able now to see him face to face, and yet live. Therefore I strike for that feeling. I give out hymns on the principle of producing a certain feeling that I want to use.

When, therefore, I open Sunday service, it is almost always with something cheerful, something hopeful; something that celebrates the Sabbath morning and its blessed associations; the triumph of God; the triumph of the church; exultant praise. These are very whole-

some elements to begin with. Then, as to the other hymns. It is a great deal better for you not to give out your sermon in your hymn, or to follow your sermon in your hymn, unless it be one of those rare hymns which will distill your sermon, and give it to them in another form. If, for instance, I wish to rebuke my congregation in the sermon for anything, I say to myself, "Now, if I give them a monitory hymn, and a monitory chapter, and then a scourging sermon, I shall overdo the whole thing. It will be without lights and shadows, and it will therefore be without elasticity, without rebound; it is not wise. I will do this rather. The state of mind in which a person takes rebuke and profits by it, is a state of comfort and of upliftedness, and I will raise them to that if I can. I will bring them up into true Christian states of mind by my hymns and my prayer; and when I get them into that state, I can say anything to them that ought to be said to anybody." So I will sing them up and pray them up, and then I will take them down a little. And not only will they bear it, but they will digest it. The rebuke will not be powerless; it will work out in their after lives.

The idea, therefore, that I wish to leave in your minds, is simply this, — that a man may be apparently working with his hymns in a different direction from his sermon, and yet really co-operating with it. If you want to bring any subject before the congregation, it is sometimes well to introduce it by some statement which, while very different from the subject itself, yet will be very fit for them to hear, and to be in sympathy with; and hymns are the instruments by which

you may best do this. This will require practice; and it will come to every man that gets the idea and attempts to put it in practice. He will at first, perhaps, not succeed well; but in time he will grow skillful in such administration of hymns.

PRAYER-MEETING MUSIC.

It only remains that I should say a word as to singing in prayer-meeting. I meant to have had some one present, who, with facile touch and in sympathy with me, should give out some hymns and give specimens of dealing with an audience, to show how much can be actually done with the hymn-book. For I feel that with a Bible and a hymn-book a man has a whole library; and if he knows how to use those two things, he knows enough to be a missionary, or to be a minister anywhere, so far as mere dealing with people is concerned. But that I cannot do to-day. Therefore I have only to say in a few cold and formal words what otherwise I could have rendered in a more lifelike form.

In speaking of the prayer-meeting, I omitted very much that I should have said on the subject of music. In the prayer-meeting, music ought to be a grand substratum. They are called prayer-meetings, but two prayers are often enough for a meeting, — about two prayers to six hymns. "Why?" Because out of every six people that pray, there are not two that can pray as a hymn can. It is not probable that you will find one person in an average congregation of two hundred that can express so admirably, with such subtle lines, the dealing of God with men, as Cowper did. It is not

once in a hundred times that a man can preach so much sound gospel in verse as old John Newton did. You have very few men like Wesley and Watts, who are the two wings of hymnody. Those two men soar as few can soar. We might say,

> "Descend, immortal dove!
> Take us upon thy wings."

When these men are invoked, they take the whole congregation on their wings, and lift them up.

Now, in singing, be familiar. For instance, if a prayer-meeting is opened with a hymn, that clears away the cobwebs. But suppose the people drawl it. As soon as they get through, you say, "Brethren, that won't do; we can't get along with that; let us take another hymn, and see what we can make of it. Take this next hymn, so and so." It wakes them all up, and every man smiles, and they go at the next with a good will. By that time, they begin to know what they are about. Take a little of this hymn, or the whole of that hymn; but for heaven's sake, gentlemen, don't emasculate hymns in order to meet the wants of those persons in the congregation who think they have served God enough when they come once a day and stay half an hour in the church, and then are impatient to get home! Of those who want short hymns and short prayers, you will never make a man out of ten thousand fit for the kingdom of God. We want religion to be so important, so earnest, that men shall demand broad, deep sermons, and, in order to have them, will give the workmen time. We want men that shall drink so deep of devotion

that they will need a deep well. Seven or eight verses are not too much, if they are the right kind of verses; and, in good hymns, two verses are often enough when you want to make a glancing shot. Or, if you will, take four or six. Do not count. Never sing by arithmetic, but make a business of it. Sing for the love of it. Your prayer-meetings are real work; and the man that is with his little congregation, molding them, inspiring them with a common feeling, carrying them off from the shoals where he knows they have run aground, with the instrument of prayer, with the instrument of singing (which is but another form of vocal prayer), his own soul filled with the Holy Ghost, in the full fellowship and love of men, — what can he not accomplish under such circumstances?

To bring the inspiration of the Holy Ghost on living men, from the days of Pentecost down to this hour, is a grand and noble way to deal with them; and ministers that understand their function, and know what their powers and instruments are, ought to be able to develop out of the prayer-meeting and out of the church an influence of Divine truth, and a feeling divinely inspired in the human soul, that shall carry men far along on their journey godward. And among the most active, subtle, effective instruments which the minister has to work with, music, studiously and skillfully used, in the household, the social meeting, the prayer-meeting, and the church service, stands eminent and highly blessed of God.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. What do you think of the Fulton Street prayer-meeting, — of its receiving requests for prayers from all parts of the world?

MR. BEECHER. — I think very well of the Fulton Street prayer-meeting; and I have no objection to their receiving requests for prayer from all parts of the world.

Q. What about interludes, as they are commonly employed now?

MR. BEECHER. — I think the music would be better without them than with them. If you consider an interlude merely as a pause for taking breath, I think that is an unworthy use for the organ; and, if it has any justification whatever, it is in this, that it extends one thought, or anticipates another, or connects the two, between two stanzas. There have been books of interludes written, which, like all things of that kind, are helps, and not substitutes.

Q. In what end of the church would you have the organ?

MR. BEECHER. — Either end. It makes very little difference where you put the instrument. It is a very great help, in speaking anywhere, to stand encompassed by the people; and if you wish to throw the minister forward from the rear wall, you must economize the room behind him by placing the organ and choir there. Then the minister will be the only one who will not see them; and the whole congregation, when they rise in their pews, will see the organ and the choir, and go naturally with them. If the leader marks time, the whole congregation, without any disturbance, can easily follow his hand. On the other hand, there may be occasions in which you are required to put the organ at the other end of the church. I should say, place it behind the minister, if I were to choose. But some-

times it is put off on one side, and I know no reason why it should not be. Generally the organ fills the whole church, from whatever point it sounds.

Q. What do you think of such playing of organists as we sometimes hear when the congregation is going out after a solemn sermon and worship?

Mr. Beecher. — Such playing as we sometimes hear in our churches is, I think, detestable. To use the organ as a mere cover of noise, under any circumstances whatever, is a defilement and an abomination. As an opposite instance, — at the close of the sermon on a communion Sabbath morning, I invite all that wish to commune to remain. A great many go out. At once Mr. Zundel takes some very tender and loving theme, and with a sweet combination of stops it fills the air. Now, those who are going out may not profit; but, as I sit in my chair and shut my eyes, it comforts me. It is so with others all through the congregation. I often wonder that people go out so long as the organ is playing, — and yet sometimes I have wondered that they stay in when they hear it.

Q. Would you make use of an instrument at a social prayer-meeting?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes; I would have a piano in a lecture-room, because it better marks the time, and there the time needs to be brought up. In many of our Sunday-schools we have organs, but the children are brought up to time by the staccato voice and manner of imperative teachers.

Q. In some churches we find many hymns sung to a great variety of tunes. What do you think of that?

Mr. Beecher. — I would not be in bondage to *any*

practice. There are some hymns that I should always want sung to a particular tune, — "Jesus, lover of my soul," for instance. That is a very marked hymn. It is one of the praying hymns. There are a thousand of them, but this is one of the exquisite ones; a hymn that I should love to hear sung if I were dying. And I should like to have it to a tune that was married to it, and sung to that only. But then, in the majority of cases, I do not feel the least objection to singing a hymn to a dozen different tunes. That is to say, I do not believe in the German method. I think that originated in the feeling that the common people were so uncultured that they could not carry more than one hymn to one tune, which should be as simple as possible. From that source, I think, comes the idea that in congregational singing all ought to sing the air and let the organ carry the harmony. I say a congregation can carry all the four parts just as well as the choir can.

Q. As a matter of fact, do not people that cannot read learn a hymn more easily if it is always associated with the same tune, — children, for instance?

Mr. Beecher. — Very likely they do. That may be a reason why, in certain congregations and in certain parts of the country, for a time at least, the wedding of a hymn and tune should be without divorce. But, as a general system, applying to all congregations, I should not advise it; I would only apply it in special cases.

Q. Would you employ chanting in the services?

Mr. Beecher. — I would, and I would employ responsive reading. I am going to, — and have been

going to for ten years in my church, — but I have n't got to it yet.

Q. Would you have the ordinary Sabbath-school music discarded from church music ?

Mr. Beecher. — I would make no distinction. I would discard a good deal of church music. Some hymn-tunes have crept into our books lately, which a man might sing to all eternity, and then, if he waited one minute, he would forget what they were, so thin and so miserable are they ! A great many Sunday-school tunes are like the Sunday-school hymns, — they are sentimentalism gone drunk. I feel a righteous indignation when I think of the stalwart stanzas of old Watts, and of John and Charles Wesley, and of Doddridge, of Montgomery's hymns, of Barton's hymns, and of many others of modern date, — noble recitations of the history of Christ and of the gospel, most magnificent delineations of the other life and of all the experiences of a Christian, — and see our children brought up on such miserable trash and garbage as they too often are in our Sunday-schools ! It is a sin and a shame to bring them up in that way. I know that children are old enough at the age of five years to feel the grandeur of some of those old hymns. And they are being cheated out of them.

Now, I do not say that all the Sunday-school hymns are to be rejected ; but we are overrun with them, and there ought to be a winnowing that should separate the vast amount of chaff from the handful of wheat. A good deal of other music is subject, I think, to the same criticism. There is much that it will be well to preserve, but much more that ought to be burned.

Q. What is your idea of a praise-meeting?

Mr. Beecher. — A praise-meeting I understand to be one in which the whole congregation so associate together, that whatever they say is an argument of praise and thanksgiving. The chord is, *Give thanks!* "With all prayer, with thanksgiving," says the Apostle. You will be struck, if you look through your concordance of the New Testament, to see how much thanksgiving is insisted upon. Now, by thanksgiving I do not understand a cold "thank you." I understand by it an exultant state of mind, — cheerful, hopeful, loving, yearning, upspringing, all running in the direction of joy and gratitude and praise. A praise-meeting is one that confines itself to that, and gives utterance to it, in prayer, in conversation, and in hymns. You might also have confessional meetings; though these, I think, should be short and very rare. It is better to have mixed meetings for such purposes, that one thing may supplement another. But praise is always wholesome.

Q. Would you always read the hymn before singing?

Mr. Beecher. — No, I would not, — I *do* not always, I mean. I would; but I never do read a hymn, first, when I do not feel like it, and, secondly, when I am pressed for time and must abbreviate the services. I often omit the reading of hymns, — and am very much blamed for it.

Q. Don't you think that the sermon is a part of worship as much as singing?

Mr. Beecher. — Well, if you extend the term "worship" so as to mean by it anything that has relation to the divine life, — yes. But we discriminate between

worship as an emotion, and as the indoctrination and instruction upon which a sermon is based. Many sermons are worship, as many sermons are poetry. Some sermons are dramas, some poems, some descriptions; but, after all, taking it comprehensively in a pastor's life, we consider the sermon as the element of instruction.

Q. Ought not all the elements of our nature to enter into worship? And does not the sermon represent the intellectual nature?

Mr. Beecher. — The sermon represents the intellectual nature. That is the foundation from which you start. Now, I do not think that the hymn does, nor the prayer. They commence at once with feeling as something already generated, and, as I have just said, represent and develop the emotional element of worship.

VI.

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ELEMENTS.

I PURPOSE, this afternoon, to speak upon some of the social forces that are to be developed and employed in church life and activity.

PASTORAL VISITING.

This brings me naturally, first, to speak upon the matter of pastoral visitation more directly than I did last year, when I touched it only as collateral to something else. Many reasons which once made pastoral visitations important no longer exist. There was a time when there were no schools, few books, no papers, little discussion, and when popular intelligence was very low; when even the ministers, the main body of them, were not as well instructed in religious things as the average citizens now are; when religious truth, if conveyed at all, must be conveyed by the professional teachers of religion. Under such circumstances, it behooved the pastor to go from house to house, indoctrinating and catechising the children. There were peculiar reasons, also, when men believed that the ordinances were special channels of grace which the

ministry alone possessed and controlled, why the administrators of those ordinances should be among their people, not only in sickness and in death, but also in various familiar relations in life. Our churches — I mean the non-hierarchical churches — have parted with these beliefs; and all those reasons that inhered in the superiority of the ministry over the great brotherhood have passed away.

MODERN REASONS FOR IT.

But there are other reasons which justify the continuance of an assiduous visitation on the part of pastors. In the first place, because a man wants, for his own sake, to know intimately those to whom he is to preach. Paul said, "Ye are our epistles, known and read of all men." He might have said, "Ye are our texts," for he derived much, especially of the argumentative portions of his epistles, from the known feelings, prejudices, beliefs, or non-beliefs of those people to whom he came; so much so that, upon a close reading, one almost thinks he can see the color of the churches in the tenor of the Pauline epistles.

In our day, the style of theology has changed. You will be compelled to change with it. There are great causes at work, quite independent of mere individual volition. Men tell us we must go back again and pursue the old sound doctrinal systems; but you cannot get back. The sun and the moon and the stars are against you. There is a movement, there is an aerial gulf-stream, and you are swept away from that which was appropriate to the anterior state. That which fitted the condition of men earlier than our time does not fit

our time, and has been, or is being, sloughed off. Preaching has become a great deal more natural and less artificial. It has more of life-form and life-force, and less of the abstract and metaphysical. Not that it will ever disavow metaphysics or abstractions, not that it will ever be concrete, absolutely, — that is not possible, — but it has largely assumed a form in which personal elements and personal sympathies mingle.

Now, this style of preaching, above all others, demands that one should reinvigorate himself by contact with life and with men. You will find that, in dealing with all those themes which go to the source of motive, which touch sympathy, which affect the hearts of men, you will be very superficial, you will be very poor in power, unless you are intimately mixed up with the life of those to whom you preach, and to whom you bring the gospel. A man may, for instance, have his pastorate in a country village, and, mingling with his people, he may write a series of discourses, which, if he were elected pastor of Yale College, would be absolutely absurd to be preached here; and yet they may be effective sermons of the gospel. They may take on so much color, they may have such form and shape, such modes of application to the unstudied village life, that if they were preached to young men of entirely scholastic habits, they would have little relation to them.

It would be very likely to be so, too, if ministers in general should make their sermons for the college. I can conceive of one making exceedingly able sermons for college classes, which, when taken out into the country, would put the parish to sleep. And for this reason,

that preaching has to be vital and effective, it should derive a great deal of its element from the known life and want of the men for whom the sermon is a medical prescription.

IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING THE PEOPLE.

Now, in ordinary pastoral life, a man must get acquainted with his people. This is hard for some; it grows easier by practice. Men may come to such a knowledge of their people that they have less and less need to visit them for their own sake, for the sake of their preparation. And, lastly, a man who has a natural aptitude for it, and has had large experience and been long in the field, may come to that state that, so far as he himself is concerned, he feels almost what is in the air, he knows what ails people without hearing, or almost without talking with them. But this is not the ordinary experience.

So, then, for the sake of a man's own freshness, vitality, directness, humanity, — that is, preaching to that which is human in men, — for all these reasons, visitation is desirable.

FREEDOM FROM CLASS INFLUENCES.

Then we should maintain visitation for our own sakes on still another ground, and that is to keep ourselves aloof from class or professional influences. It is very desirable that any class of men following the same general pursuit — physicians, lawyers, ministers — should see much of each other. The *esprit de corps* is not only a source of refreshment, but there is great instruction in it. But then, men are very strongly in-

clined to become selfish, to be absorbed in their class, to think and to sympathize after the manner of their kind. Now, for the minister, above all men, it is a necessity that he should sympathize with humanity from the top to the bottom; with all men, not with one class of men; not with the best men, not with men of purest thought alone, because that unfits him to deal familiarly and easily with men who have no such habit of thought. As the steward and the cook must know the tastes of those for whom they are preparing the table from day to day, so the minister must know the taste and the wants of those for whom he spreads food in the pulpit from Sunday to Sunday; and if you get into class habits, you will be a minister for ministers, but not for the people. And visitation tends largely to break that up; especially if you visit not the select families, not the places where it is pleasant to go, but everybody. Take your own pleasure along with you, and be glad to see everybody and anybody. The minister should cut the loaf of society, not horizontally, but vertically, and take it with all there is in it, from top to bottom. And you will find — as it is in the housewife's cake sometimes — that the raisins are pretty much all at the bottom.

GAINING THE CONFIDENCE OF PEOPLE.

Then, it is very desirable that the minister should have the confidence and the sympathy of his people, that he should be warmed and upheld by them. Nothing contributes so much to this as personal acquaintance with them, man by man, child by child, all through the parish. If a man has naturally ge-

nial manners, and is a man of genius, and delights people on Sunday, they gather around him for that reason. He gets their sympathy somewhat in that way. But ordinarily we ought to begin with the presumption that we are not men of genius. They who think they are geniuses when they begin, seldom have reason to think so when they end; and if you are one, you will find it out farther on. You would better begin as though you were simply persons of fair average intelligence, whose life-facts are to be developed by industry and close adherence to all the known paths of experience. In going among your people, to draw them to you and to open their hearts and their sympathies by pastoral visitation, you prepare the ground. A minister who does not visit very much, in an ordinary parish, is like a man that sows his seed in the spring before he has plowed the ground. If you visit, that plows them; then preach, as you have your furrows already open where the seed may fall; then harrow them, and, in due time, we may hope to see the result.

TWO SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR VISITING.

There are two conditions of society in which visiting should abound. First, it should become pre-eminently conspicuous and mainly instrumental in your ministry, where you are thrown among people who do not care about going to church. And, secondly, it should abound in those conditions where people, when they do go, are little interested; in other words, where they are barren and you are barren. In many communities the church is a very small thing; there is very little of it; and yet the population is large. Now, the people

are all yours. A genuine fisherman being told that the stream above the dam is full of trout, only nobody can catch them, — why, his blood is all on fire! He says, "I cannot catch them? You will see whether I can't!" And he will meditate about those trout night and day, and he *will* catch them, for his ambition is inspired. A minister going into a community where there are but few that come to church ought to have his whole soul stirred within him. "Not come to church! They *shall* come to church. If they do not, the church shall go to them." You go into a community not to be snubbed. Let no man despise your youth or your inefficiency. That is a genuine field for pride.

HARD FIELDS.

When you go into a community, make up your mind, "I don't back out of this community. I have been sent here, and, after due consideration and investigation, here am I. I did not come to be defeated, and I shall conquer; standing, or stooping, or kneeling, I am going to have my way in this community, and these people shall have the gospel." If they are pirates, gamblers, smugglers, drunkards, racers, sporting-men, no matter, they are *men*; and if you believe that the gospel is the power of God for salvation, you have got it. Do you mean to stand and let any community overbear you, or drive you out? With all manner of zeal and patience, with all manner of enthusiasm and affection, and by such measures as are necessary, — if one thing won't do, try another; if that won't do, try another; but maintain yourself there, secure a lodgment and gain the victory. In going into such a community, I

do not care how well you preach, they won't for a year or two find that out; but you should go among them, go to those that do not expect you, go to those that do not like you. I heard old Dr. Humphrey say that where he was first settled there was a man very much opposed to him, a farmer; and the Doctor, who had been brought up on a farm and counted himself something in the harvest-field, went out to visit the old man in his field, where he was reaping. It was before the time even of cradles, much more that of mowing-machines. The man proposed to go back to the house and entertain the Doctor respectfully. "No, no," said Dr. Humphreys; and he threw off his coat. "Give me a sickle; we can talk as we work." So he took hold, and beat the man all out of his own field, sickling. With that went all the old fellow's prejudice; he was one of the Doctor's right-hand men after that. There lived over on the other side of the street in Lawrenceburg, where first I had my settlement, a very profane man, who was counted ugly. I understood that he had said some very bitter things of me. I went right over into his store, and sat down on the counter to talk with him. I happened in often, — day in and day out. My errand was to make him like me. I did make him like me, — and all the children too; and when I left, two or three years afterward, it was his house that was open to take me and all my family for the week after I gave up my rooms. And to the day of his death I do not believe the old man could mention my name without crying. It was my good fortune to meet his daughter, or daughter-in-law, in the cars during my latest trip in the West, and it brought back this scene, which I had quite for-

gotten, and of which I give you now the benefit by way of illustration.

HEART-WORK INSTEAD OF HEAD-WORK.

Another point: there seem to be in the ministry men of very considerable force, men of a good deal of one kind of tact and genius, but they do not run to ideas. There are a great many churches whose force is supposed to lie in the pulpit; but it does not. And yet they hold together a congregation; it grows, it mellows, it becomes liberal. That is the case in which a man must apply the power that is in him personally by visitation, — making up for the barrenness of his sermons by the richness of his own heart. If it has not been given to him to have a lighthouse in the head, if the lighthouse is in the heart, let him go personally where its light can shine often amongst the people. I have heard persons say, when a brilliant preacher came into town, and there was every reason why they should leave their parish and go to hear the new-comer, "Still, I don't know; we have had our own minister so long, and he is so good, and we all love him so much, and our children have all been brought up under his preaching, so that he has meshed them, he has spun himself all around them, — it is almost like a bereavement to go out of his church; and that in spite of his sermons too."

When people won't come to hear you preach, do you go and talk to them; and when they do come to hear you, and you have hardly anything to preach about, then go to them all the more. There are hundreds of men that talk well and preach badly. There are a

great many that I meet on the street who talk well to me, and who, as ministers, are genial, whose faces are full of inspiration; they make points, and they have an incident or a story to tell, and besides all that they have a smile that rewards me, and I like to meet them dearly. But oh, I *don't* like to go and hear them preach!

So then, for either of these reasons, and for those that went before, — pastoral visitation!

GENERAL SOCIAL AMENITY AMONG CHURCH-MEMBERS.

I wish now to speak upon something which is coming into vogue, but which is comparatively recent, and has not yet received that attention in the development of church and Christian life that it ought to have; I mean the social sympathy of the people, that feeling of interest in each other which belongs to church communion. That part of the community that is given to your charge ought to be made really to love each other. We read about that, and hear about it; think about it! What is, on the whole, the vital sympathy of church-members with each other? Now I shall not be thought personal, because I know scarcely a soul in New Haven; but take the three churches which stand on the Common. Take them family by family, and ask: What is the real sympathy, the electric thrill, the gladness that they have at meeting each other when they go to church on Sunday, or after they come out of church? How is it that, in traveling, or upon the street, or anywhere, you feel the fact that a man is a member of the same church with yourself to be a bond of sympathy? If a man who has married your sister, but

whom you have never seen before, comes into the house after a distant journey, and you meet him for the first time, his relationship with the family is a reason for gladness over and above anything you may find in him. He is himself and your sister too; he represents both to you.

Every Christian is supposed to represent to every other one the Christ that loved him out of sin and into redemption. There ought to be a genuine thrill of joy on meeting. What is the fact?

IMPERFECT KINDS.

Well, there is this: highly organized churches have a spurious kind of sympathy. It is the sympathy of ecclesiastical or theological selfishness. In times of high controversy, when one church is orthodox and another is heterodox, — and sometimes, you know, orthodoxy and heterodoxy are interchangeable terms, and they shift about promiscuously, all the orthodox people feel an intense interest in each other, for the battle has come to be hot. The lines are drawn. People are glad you belong to "our church." They say, "Did n't our minister give it to them last Sunday?" A little combativeness quickens sympathy very much. So, on the other hand, there is a kind of *esprit de corps* in a church which represents itself as the only church, or, if not the only church, then the best of the lot. In Methodist class-meetings, I have often heard men thank God that they ever came into the Methodist Church. But it is the Methodist Church they love; it is not the Christ that is behind all men. I hear men congratulate themselves that they are in the Baptist Church, — often-

times I congratulate them too. I know men who feel that, being in the Episcopal Church, they are high and dry above all others. But it is one thing to like a man because he belongs to the same church that you do, and another to like him because he is a man, and a man whom Christ has loved, and whom he is redeeming by the power of his blood. Ecclesiastical sympathies are not to go for nothing, but they are of the lowest value. They are too often put in the very highest place. I would not put them on a low plane; but, after all, the deepest feeling of sympathy between man and man should not be in respect to mere ecclesiastical or theological peculiarities.

Then there is a spiritual or religious sympathy existing in churches. By this I mean that where men are genuinely converted and truly spiritually minded, they have a sort of vague and general regard and sympathy for the body of Christ. I think that, for the most part, our New England Orthodox churches get very little further than that (I may perhaps be too unmeasured in the statement, but that is my impression).

Now, there is another kind of sympathy than that; namely, the sympathy which men may have with each other on the highest spiritual grounds. I admit that to be the highest; I admit that if the development of the highest form of spiritual experience were so prevalent as to dominate other forms, and all men could come together and touch each other on that ground, that would be in every sense the best. But, as a matter of fact, it is only the twentieth, or the thirtieth, or the fortieth individual that is competent to that highest form.

THE TRUE PRACTICAL PLANE.

There are comparatively few who can feel a large, intelligent, generous sympathy with men on the highest spiritual and religious grounds. And in regard to the great mass of men, if we come into sympathy with them, we must do it on the intermediate plane, namely, where their humanity is, and on those grounds which are common to mankind; on grounds of generosity, of simple common kindness, of ordinary intercourse. There is where the play of sympathy is to be. Every church ought to bring its members together in such a way that they shall like each other, — not because they are perfect (for then how many would there be in fellowship?), not because they are of this grade or of that church; but from a feeling of generous, glowing, joyous, glorious *fellowship*; fellowship which, while it may begin or terminate in the very highest moral experiences, takes in all forms of mutual kindliness, clear down to the lowest physical conditions. Thus, to every member in the church there should be the assurance that he is welcome to all the others, or, at all events, to the great body of the Christian church. Now, is this the case? Do men get together on Sunday in that way? Do they go away from church on Sunday with any such glow as this? As a general rule, I think not. The point I wish to make is, that, in the administration of the social affairs of the church, provision should be made by which the members would see each other, not only as church-members, but in their ordinary relations, — as neighbors, as friends, as citizens, as business men, as common folks.

PROVISION FOR SOCIAL GATHERINGS.

Over and above the sympathy which you beget by Sunday services and week-day lectures and prayer-meetings, there ought to be meetings where people gather simply because they like each other; not to talk formally and stiffly about moral things, but to talk just as they would at home. This can be done in a variety of ways. In the first place, I think our churches are being built more and more with large social accommodations; parlors to the church are becoming quite as indispensable as pews and pulpits. This is a sign of the gradual change which is going on in this direction; and it is a very admirable change. No church ought to be built after this, in city or country, that has not in connection with it either a place set apart as a parlor, or a room which by some little change of seats could be made into a parlor. There ought to be, from week to week, or every other week, during the largest part of the year, such little gatherings as shall mingle the people together and make them like one another. There are few persons that you do not like better, in a certain measure, if you meet them often, provided that you are at all charitable yourself; and there are few that you will like as well, if you meet them too often and carry the intimacy too far. But up to a certain point — and you will never be likely to transcend it in these church gatherings — you will like everybody better. You find this man is not so stingy as you thought he was; that man not so cold-hearted as he seemed to be; this woman not so sharp-tongued as she had the name of being; and there are a great many other qualities of

heart and head that come out. Why! that old dullard never laughed at a joke, and you thought it was not in the power of man to make him laugh in that way. You find there is something in him. There is a great deal in everybody; but everybody does not always know how to get it out. Society, intercourse, fellowship in church life, develops these things. Men respect each other, they get over their little difficulties more easily, they fall into quarrels less easily. There are a thousand ways in which church life, by being developed in this manner, socially thrives as it otherwise would not. This is not to be considered as a substitute for meetings; it is supplementary and auxiliary.

PICNICS.

Then I am in favor of multiplying picnics as much as possible, and all sorts of little out-of-doors observances for the summer. In Boston, they used once a year to go down the Bay for a chowder-party; all the concomitants of that were agreeable, and the people who went were, to be sure, the more select part of the congregation, but it did much to help them in their social life. It did much to mix the people together and make the church more harmonious and homogeneous. It is very desirable, too, for another reason, — especially in cities, — namely, that our people are of all sorts. They are from the top, the middle, and the bottom of society. The gradations are infinite, and it very desirable that rich people should mingle with poor people, that persons of culture and refinement should be kindly and intimately associated with persons of less refinement.

THE CHURCH SHOULD BE A HOUSEHOLD.

It is very desirable that you should temper the body of Christ together, so that every one of the members of the church shall have a pride in the gifts of every other one. Do you think that in a household where the oldest daughter is an artist, and paints; and the second girl is a musical genius, who, though she cannot paint, is brilliant in playing the piano; and the third girl is the housekeeper, eminent in economy and tact, who likes entertaining and likes management, and that is her forte; and the boys are, respectively, one a merchant, another a lawyer, and the other a physician, and they all excel, — do you suppose that when they come together they envy each other? Don't you suppose that the boys are all proud of the sisters, and the sisters of the brothers? — of this one, because she has a genius for painting, and of that one, because she has a genius for music, and of the other, because she has those fine domestic traits; of this one, because he is a successful merchant, and that one, because he is an able lawyer, and of the young doctor, because his last thesis was published in the "Surgical Review"? They all glory in each other. They sit around and look with glowing eyes upon one another. The gifts of each belong to all.

Now, according to the theory of Paul, — or the theory of Christ, from whom Paul got everything, (the Jews say, "Where would Christianity have been if it had not been for Paul?" and I say, Where would Paul have been, if it had not been for Christ?) so, according to the theory of Paul *and*

Christ, the church is a body, and you are members one of another, and what stirs one stirs all, and the gifts of every one in the church belong to all, and the feebler members ought to be proud of the gifts of the more eminent members. Is it so? is that the feeling of fellowship, oneness, fraternity, unity in the church; or are not men envying each other's gifts and opportunities? Is there not infinite friction in the movement of the wheels, because the passions of envy and jealousy and selfishness are permitted to mix so much in church life? You must get rid of those things. You cannot preach them out of the church. You cannot legislate them out of the church. You cannot get them out of the church so long as the Devil is alive: but then you can go a great ways toward it, if you knead the church together. You never saw a good batch of bread in your life that was not kneaded a good deal; and you never saw a church that was really good which was not a good deal kneaded.

THE RIGHT USE OF THEOLOGY.

I think that this idea of working in the church towards personal fellowship and personal unity and sympathy is far more prevalent in the New Testament than in theology. It must be, of course. Theology is osteology, and a skeleton is a poor thing to live with. But that which makes a man handsome is not being without bones. Some people say occasionally, because we hit theology a slap, that we do not believe in it. Indeed, we do believe in it; but we believe in something else besides. Theology ought to be inside; it is the frame on which you build everything. We believe in

the succulency and the elasticity of the nerve, and the bloom and beauty of the skin that overlays it all. But what would all these things be if there were not any bones there to lay them upon, and by which they could stand up and be operated? Men would all be gelatinous; no better than so many jelly-fish. So theology has its own sphere and function. But, more than this, even ethical preaching does not ordinarily aim at that ideal fellowship and unity which were sought after by the Apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a spiritual kingdom.

THE SUPREMACY OF SPIRITUAL QUALITIES.

I think men preach a great deal more in the line of the seventh of Romans, — then they are Calvinists, — or the eighth of Romans, — and then they are apt to be Universalists or Arminians, — a great deal more, in short, in the line of the deep doctrinal experiences, than they do in that of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." And then Paul goes on to say, "Though I have all zeal and all faith and all knowledge, and though I have everything, if I have not love, I have nothing." Then comes that magnificent chant, than which there never was a nobler since the angels sang the coming of Christ, that marvelous description of love that does not linger or grow weary, but rushes through; every stroke is like the stroke of Michael Angelo's brush that brings out the glowing traits! And then that still more profound, mysterious, and marvelous passage in which it is said that

all the things that men know, and think, and believe, are relative to time. Knowledge shall pass away, theology, philosophy, mysteries, prophecies, shall all cease, but there are some things that will not pass away, — and what are these ? Faith, hope, love. These abide. Death, by the great principle of relativity, will wipe out thousands of experiences and things that are important to us while we are here, and they will not go beyond the grave. But there are some things that will go beyond it, and are a part of immortality ; and these are faith, hope, and love.

Now, the power of preaching should be to develop in men by the social life the affinities and affections that are in these great qualities, and that carry them through life and out of the present into the eternal life.

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

The next topic of which I will speak under the head of the social forces is the Sunday-school ; a subject so familiar to you that I shall, perhaps, be relieved from saying much. I think that Sunday-schools are the young people's church. Although the minister ought to preach so that the young people shall have their portion in his sermons, yet, for a variety of reasons, going to church is not a very pleasant thing to little children. They are full of life and motion, and our habits of going to church are not like those of the Orientals ; they are not like the habits that existed upon the borders, where mothers went to church with their children, and where all the household duties were performed in the church, or by just stepping out of the door, and everything went on as usual. The minister preached through

the squalls and storms of discipline, and all manner of domestic infelicities, and what not? We have ordered things so that there is a method in our churches, but it is a method to which old people can better conform than little children. They nestle. I am always glad to see a child go to sleep in church. It is one of the beatitudes. There ought to be provision made for children. The Sunday-school is their part of Sunday service, provided it is properly conducted, and is in a place which is comfortable for children, and keyed to their necessities.

HOW CHILDREN SHOULD BE TAUGHT.

Let me say generally, without pausing to discuss the whole question of Sunday-schools, that it seems to me the fundamental idea in teaching children is not the same as that in teaching grown people. Grown people need to be taught not so much ideas at first, as affections. The world has educated them, in respect to intelligence, in a certain way, and the relative deficiency in adults is in right affections. But in little children affections are pre-eminent, and feeling is their weakness, — that is, their strength; for when a thing is too strong we always call it a weakness. So the prime purpose in Sunday-school work should be to teach ideas to children, and indoctrinate them, — to give instruction. Not that we are to omit appeals to their conscience and their affections. But it is so easy to beat the Sunday-school up into a foam, if we only have a zealot as a superintendent, and to have all the children crying, and all of them full of experiences which you know they cannot have. You might, with as much propriety, take a bucket of

water and swing it around, and call it an ocean, as to bring a little child to me and say that he has these experiences which imply growth, width, and a sense of infinity. Therefore I say that, in instructing children, whether by descriptive, or didactic, or historical means, we should do it always through the imagination, — God has ordained that children should learn through the imagination; the Reason is Chief Justice, but that which brings the case before the court is Imagination.

Children in Sunday-school are to receive *instruction*, for a variety of reasons. First, because the children need it; and secondly, because it prevents the bringing in of those ten thousand little clap-trap things that interest children, and do nothing else. There is nothing that interests a child so much as real knowledge, wholesome instruction, — nothing! When I was a child, my dear aunt Esther used to promise that if I would be a good boy she would read to me on a Sunday afternoon about the ten plagues of Pharaoh; and I was enough of a Christian to like to see a fellow thrashed, so I always wanted to hear about Pharaoh! So, too, it was with all the inimitable stories of Joseph's life, of Ruth, and the other histories of the Old Testament, and the parables of the New.

Children love knowledge. Their inquiries are often as salutary for you as they are natural to them.

In adapting, therefore, the Sunday-school to the wants of children, treat them as rational human beings. Believe that the foundation element in them is curiosity, as you call it, — that is, the nascent forms of philosophical feeling, the knowing states of mind that are to be developed in them. In connection with that,

but without keeping it uppermost, or rather keeping it undermost as the foundation, make moderate appeal to the feelings of children. I am opposed, heartily opposed, to the impositions that I see practiced on children by attempting to make them, at nine, ten, eleven, or twelve years old, do things and feel things that belong to adult life, and do not belong to children. The idea that you can organize them and bring them to pledges, and get them to make promises, and put them on platforms that are pre-eminently out of their reach, it seems to me, is absolutely unfair to them.

MAKE RELIGION JOYFUL TO CHILDREN.

Our Sunday-schools ought also to be so conducted that all the associations of children with the church shall be pleasant. I feel an intense desire, which grows stronger as I grow older, that religion shall be to men that beautiful thing which it really is. It is not a gaunt skeleton; it is not a scarecrow; it is not a prison, nor a bondage; it is not a chain, nor a shackle; it is the brightness, the beauty, the joy, the triumph of sunshine. It is liberty gained by those that have been endungeoned. It is light revealing the world in wonder to men that have been blind. It is all sweet sounds coming in concord to ears long since closed, or that never heard. It is liberty, power. It is all sweetness in the soul, and ecstatic hope. I hate asceticism; I hate the bondage and the gloom which are so often thought to be necessary as medicines for depravity. Light sweeps away the visions of the midnight. Morning is the best cure for midnight, and I long to have the children feel that there is nothing in this world more at-

tractive, more earnestly to be desired, than manhood in Christ Jesus. But ah! I cannot preach to little children the clouded brow; I cannot preach the eye of fire, nor the hand that carries the iron scepter. I must preach him who said, "Suffer them to come unto me," and said it with such sweetness that children spontaneously rushed to his arms. Think of what Christ must have been, when his disciples had to interfere between him and children that were running to him, or brought by their mothers. That Christ I preach; and I love to see my children — for they are my children — gather around about the knees of Jesus with the same feelings that they have toward father and toward mother, and look upon their companions and the members of the church as though looking upon brothers and sisters. Thus gradually the thought is etherealized and lifted up to the higher sphere, as their young imaginations and the glories of heavenly relations are added to the natural affinities of the earthly state.

So, in our Sunday-schools, all precision and rigidity, except so far as is necessary for organic purposes, all tasking and all government that is painfully oppressive, should be omitted. While the Sunday-school should not be a mere amusement-shop, while the picnics and various excursions should not predominate over the moral ends, yet there should be such a proportion of them that children should love their Sunday-school better than anything else. I believe my own Sunday-school children do. In the providence of God we have about twenty-five hundred or three thousand children under my general care, and I think they are proud of their school, and love it. When

the new Bethel building was in danger of taking fire from a neighboring building that was burning, I heard of it and rushed down Hicks Street, — for it is a little bit of an idol to me too, — and I saw the children sitting on the thresholds of their houses, and on the streets, and holding each other's hands and crying as though their little hearts would break. I said to one of the little girls, "What is the matter?" "Oh," said she, "our Bethel is burning! our Bethel is burning!" The children really grieved as though it were their father's house. They love the place, they love everything about it, and they love each other. Sunday-schools should inspire in children this feeling of love for religion, and for the church, and for all the offices of religion.

I insist upon this the more, because as a child I never did love Sunday-schools. The first one I went to was in the southwest pen — or pew, as they called it — in my father's old Litchfield church. I think there were three other wretches there. I had sat out my father's sermon, and this was the nooning; and while my little stomach cried "Gingerbread!" they said "Catechism." I remember swinging my little legs from those high seats. I could not reach half-way down to the ground. It was, of all things, grim and disconsolate; for I had to have catechism just as much at home,— it was not a substitute at all. The next time I went to Sunday-school, it was in the Bennett Street schoolhouse in Boston, after we moved there. I think I went there two Sundays. The first Sunday I got along well, I suppose, for it is obliterated from my mind, — I suppose I was profited. On the second Sunday some little

question came up between me and the teacher, and he cuffed me, I think, and I kicked him, under the seat. I did not go any more to that school. So my personal experience in Sunday-schools has not been particularly auspicious.

But in my present charge, my own church, I think the happier spirit I have described belongs to our Sunday-schools. I speak, therefore, of what I have seen, and testify that which I do know, that it is in the power of teachers and of a church to make a school profoundly interesting; to crowd it full of children and keep it full; to teach them the fundamental truths of Christianity without neglecting their spiritual affections and religious feelings; and to make them love each other and love the church, and associate with the whole round of religion the most joyous thoughts and feelings.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Would you advise parents to compel their children to go to church, for the sake of forming the habit, against their inclination?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes; mournfully, yes. I think that where children do not wish to go to church, as a general thing it is largely the result of cause, and that that cause does not always lie in the depravity of human nature — in the child. Now, I was a minister's son, and I had to go to meeting, and I knew it. Therefore I hardly ever tried to get away. Once in a while I escaped; but I do not remember that I ever understood a single thing my father preached about till I was ten years old; and my father certainly was a good preacher. He seldom preached descriptive or historical sermons;

they were almost always structural; they had a very strong body of argument, united with appeal. He was settled in Litchfield, where there was a law school and a female seminary; and he had for a congregation, not only astute farmers and able mechanics, but also many lawyers, and the daughters of many of the most cultivated families in the land at that time. And his style of preaching, unconsciously to himself, was fitted to the more intellectual part of the congregation. And I,— poor little curmudgeon! — sat down in the pew, — and, by the by, the minister's pew was right under the side of the pulpit; the pulpit was — less than twenty-five feet high, and we were so concealed that I could n't see my father, and should never have known who he was if I had not seen him at home. I sat in that high-backed and high-sided pew, and the only light or comfort that I had, the only consolation of the gospel administered to me, was the privilege of squeaking one of those little rounds that turned in the open woodwork of the pew. Now, my mother was not a cruel woman, but she did some things that I think she has always been sorry for, since she has gone to her rest. When I would fall asleep, and really was out of the way and no trouble to anybody, she would rap my head and wake me up. That is treating children not according to their nature; it is not motherly; it is not right. Now, if children are brought up where, however much food there may be in the church for adults, there is none at all for them, why should they want to go? In the Episcopal and the Roman Catholic churches there is something for children. In that regard those churches are far beyond us. A child can follow the service in

the book, can make responses, can read, can sing, — and there is very much of song service in the Episcopal Church. In ours, how little is there which is fitted to the thought of the children! While we take care of adults, and provide for their edification, we are in danger of letting God's little ones take care of themselves.

Q. What position would you have the minister occupy in the Sunday-school?

Mr. Beecher. — If he has nobody else that can do it, and if he is as strong as Samson, he should be superintendent. But, as a general rule, young gentlemen, if you can do so, shift upon other people just as much work as you can; there will always be enough left for you. Make others visit, if you can; make others take care of the Sunday-school, if you can; make them preside in meetings, if you can; send men to this, that, and the other station. You are gaining all the time by drilling them, and you will have just as much as you can do yourself. In my first parish I was superintendent of my Sunday-school, and also taught a class at the same time, so that I served from the very bottom, and went up. But after I went to Indianapolis, I had men that could do it. In my first parish I had only two men, — no, I had but one, and I did not want him. I had to be superintendent, or else there would be no school. In respect to all those things, do the best you can. If you can get somebody that will do about half-way, with you as his auxiliary, take him. If you cannot find anybody, do it yourself, and all the rest of the work besides. You will notice that in ny community where you have to attend to so many of

these details, there is not so much intelligence as to make very strong draughts on your preaching power. But if you go into a community where there is more culture, and knowledge is greater, and where you have constantly to rise yourself, you must intermit. That man is the best preacher and organizer of a church who knows how to make the most men do the most things.

Q. What is the best kind of pastoral visitation?

MR. BEECHER. — All kinds. If I were going to visit the sick, I should go with sympathy and gentleness, with cheerfulness, but not with mirth. If I were going to visit a family in the ordinary society of life, I should go to the house and call for the children; that is my choice, always; and I notice that where I have the children, I have the old folks too. But then, never go in any formal, set way; go naturally, go as a man, go because you like the people.

Q. What do you say as to praying in families?

MR. BEECHER. — I should never thrust prayer upon a family. I would always go in such a state that, if it were desirable, I should be, at once, ready and willing to pray with them. That leads me to another point. When I came to Brooklyn, all the young folks were disposed to avoid me; that is, outside of the church and the meetings. They thought that I would *talk minister* to them. But I said to them all in my congregation, "My young friends, I want you to understand that I will never open my lips to you on the subject of religion till you ask me. If you think I am going to follow you up, you mistake me; I shall no more do it than I

would insist, if I were a physician, upon throwing my pills around in a promiscuous party, and asking the guests if they did not feel bad, and if they would not like to take some. There is a fair understanding between us. You may meet me and travel with me all day, and I won't bother you; but whenever you want me, and will give me the least hint, you will find me right there, ready to talk, and help, and do everything I can for you." That understanding changed our relations at once. Thus the most perfect freedom was established between us, and now, if they want anything, they come to me without the least hesitation, and I never pursue them. I do not lay down this as a rule in reference to prayer, because there are some men who have an art of pursuing people which is blessed of God, and which is natural to them. There are some persons who will go into a family, and at once say, "The Lord be with you!" and everybody feels at once that it is the natural thing to say. I could no more do it than I could go in and enunciate a proposition out of Euclid, — and that is an absolute impossibility.

Q. In regard to the relation of the Sabbath-school to the church, a matter which has often been discussed here, should the Sabbath school be a part of the church, or should it be a separate organization?

Mr. Beecher. — The question never came up with us. We never let it come up. As far as possible, I always sought to let the Sunday-school have its own autonomy. I have avoided, in all my ministry, the exercise of authority. I have refused authority in order that I might have influence, which is a great deal better. There is nothing that I want in my

parish which, if they find it out, is not done instantly; but I avoid letting them know it if I possibly can. If they are to elect a superintendent, unless it is a critical case, I refuse to do anything about it. I say, "You are competent; do it yourselves." I have refused to have any secret councils with my own members. I have refused to lay any pipe whatsoever in respect to church affairs. I say to them, "I feel that I stand four-square here among you. I am a member in the church; I am not a dictator. Because I am a pastor, I am not a master. You shall not make me budge an inch from my place, nor will I attempt to make you budge an inch from your place." So perfectly amicable relations have always subsisted, and we have never, during a pastorate of nearly twenty-six years, during the stormiest periods that any nation ever went through, amidst questions that have agitated the community so that it was red-hot, — there has never been any difficulty in my church that I have had to call my deacons together to settle, or a difficulty of any description whatever.

Q. What is the best visitation?

Mr. Beecher. — The best of all visitation is that which is casual and on purpose, — that which is apparently off-handed in the freedom of casual visitation, but which in your own secret mind forms a part of the system by which you go through your whole parish. But, young gentlemen, a man has a right first to the visitation of the family where his own soul is fed. You have a right to your own society, and a minister ought to be jealous of that. If the whole parish are jealous because you visit in two or three

families for your own sake, stand your ground. You have as much right to your friendships as they have to theirs. It is not necessary for you to give up your manhood in order to please them, if they are wrong.

Then there should be visitation amongst those that need it the most. Begin at the bottom and go up, and, if anybody is to be neglected, let it be the rich and those that are intelligent. In other words, the more highly organized families are able to get along without you, except so far as friendship is concerned. I know dozens of families in my parish, — yes, I may say a great many more, — in which the average intelligence and the average spirituality are far greater than the average intelligence and spirituality of the whole church, — families that are churches above churches, as it were. Now, it is very pleasant for you to go there by elective affinities. Yet they are the ones to neglect, if anybody is to be neglected. Take care of the widow, the orphan, the unfriended. If a man is under a cloud, go to him. If a man fails in business, and the tongues of all men are against him, do you be right by his side and say to him, "Now, let me hold you up; I don't want to ask any questions or to have you say anything, but here I am: by and by, when you want me to say or to do, here I am." Go down into the deep waters with people, and be all the time looking out for the people toward whom you are to act the part of the chivalric man. Take the weak side, and keep on the weak side all the time.

Q. Should the apparent proximate object of visitation be simply to cultivate good feeling between you and those families, or to exert a direct religious influence?

MR. BEECHER. — Both, sir. If, in the community where you live, you are among a flood of magazines and newspapers, and the intelligence of the community is as great or perhaps greater than yours, it would be like carrying coals to Newcastle to go into a family and try to instruct its members. But you might go into another family, where they did not know the news, and then it would be a mistake if you did not impart information to them. But adapt yourself without routine, without an absolute, stiff rule, to the exigency. When a man goes out for botany, and sees a hollyhock, and puts his hand up and picks it, and sees another flower down there, and stoops down and picks it, he does not have a rule to pick flowers in any particular way.

Q. What do you do when you go into a family, and the mother is desirous to show off the excellences of her daughter on the "pianner," as she calls it, and is full of pride in her little ones, — what do you do? Are n't you tried sometimes?

MR. BEECHER. — Well, sir, my Master carried his people's sins and their burdens, and I try to carry my people's too. I do not know that the pianos are so trying to me as the pictures are. But, above all other things, it is the babies, the prodigies, that I have in my parish! I do not know that you ever had them, but there are born unto us children that are immense, wonderful! These, however, are little infirmities in people. I sometimes think, while we look upon them, and mark them, and amuse ourselves over them, that we have never had a chance to look into the note-book of the angels, to see what they thought of us. My impression is that, if we could get the notion of superior beings

as to the thousand things that they see in us grown folks, we should find that we are more childish in their sight than children are in ours. At any rate, there are a thousand considerations that should cause us to be very patient and to put the best face on those things; only *don't tell lies.* Dr. Humphrey was told by a lady, "Doctor, you know that mothers think very much of their babies, but I have one that I think is a paragon." "I don't doubt it, ma'am," said he. "I have eight just such at home."

Q. Did you mean to have us understand, in some of your remarks a little while ago, that children from nine to twelve years of age were not often true Christians, worshiping God in spirit and in truth?

Mr. Beecher. — Oh! far from that. I believe that children worship God at four and five years of age. I believe there never will be a conversion of this world until the cradles are the sanctuaries. We have got to bring children up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord"; this transplanting of old trees is better than nothing, but that is all that can be said of it.

VII.

BIBLE-CLASSES — MISSION SCHOOLS — LAY WORK.

CONTINUING the general subject of the social forces of the church, I shall to-day speak especially of Bible-Classes, of Mission Schools, of the Lay Element in the church, and of Young Men's Associations, — all of them very nearly connected, though their names would seem to put them at some distance apart.

There never was a time, I think, in which there was so much direct and indirect movement, from so many sources, against the sacred books which we call the Bible, as there is to-day. There was never so much effectually said against them, which every honest man ought to hear. And yet I think there never was a time when the Bible in its main objects and ends was so inexpugnable, so superior to criticism, and so manifestly admirable, as to-day. That is to say, while you may find fault with the time element, the mere external vehicle by which truth has been conveyed; while you may find some disagreements of dates, or some erroneous historical statements, or the like, — yet,

when you consider the end which the Scriptures have in view, namely, the formation of perfect manhood in Christ Jesus, science has not touched the Scriptures, except to illustrate and to fortify them. For example, there is not a single element in them that goes to constitute social or civil morality, that has been set aside either by any experience or by any scientific deduction. The Book of Proverbs, although its aim is comparatively not high, yet, considered as a resultant of observation and experience in the ethical relations of society, is just as applicable to-day as in the hour when it was issued. If there has been any effect produced by the immense revolutions and changes which have gone on in the world, it has been to brighten the sentences, and make them clearer.

If you go higher than mere ethics, you cannot find a single thing that Scripture has pronounced evil, that has since been shown to be good, or that by any modification could be made good. You cannot find a single virtue that is admired and highly extolled in Scripture, that has been shown in the development of man and in the process of scientific investigation to be other than a virtue. You cannot find that the scriptural ideal of Christian character has been in any part impaired. It never stood so high as to-day. Never was there a need more apparent (and, I think, soon to be universally felt), of the contact of the soul of man with God's, for the sake of developing its higher and restraining its lower powers. So that if the Word of God be considered simply as a guide-book to manhood, and through manhood to immortality and blessedness, it stands unchanged and unshaken to-day.

Now, the teaching of that book — while it has, perhaps, been taught too narrowly and literally, and there is room for improvement in our methods of study — was never more important in the training of the church, in the cultivation and direction of its resources, than it is to-day.

IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE-CLASSES.

The matter of Bible-classes is a very difficult one to manage. But the outcome is so admirable that every pastor should find some way to manage them, and to make them a working part in the life of the church which he supervises. We are not to allow the vast flood of literature, the immense increase and popularization of what may be called solid learning, especially the exceedingly interesting and growing developments of natural science, to draw away, as they are now tending to do, the minds of the young. Our houses have libraries as they had not formerly, and our young people have a good deal more to read. When as a child I was, for any reason, shut up at home half a day on Sunday, I was not allowed to read "Robinson Crusoe." I had "Little Henry and his Bearer," and "Pilgrim's Progress," and some of Hannah More's works, as well as a few moral treatises, which, if one began to read, he would retreat from them into the Bible, quick! These were about the whole of my literature, and the Bible was, after all, the most interesting book in the house.

But now the Sunday-school library has opened upon the children a flood, or rather a swarm, that can sometimes be compared to little else than the locusts, the

lice, and the frogs of Egypt. There is, I think, an immense amount of wishy-washy stuff, wrought together with a certain sort of fictitious and unwholesome interest, and eagerly taken in by children. The most difficult book in the world to write, is a book for a child; yet it is upon this that everybody thinks he can begin his literary career. And so we are in danger of being carried away by what may be called the "swill of the house of God."

STUDYING THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE.

For all these reasons, the intrinsic value of the Bible, the wide discussion going on about it, the multiplicity of literary works and of religious works, called so by courtesy, — for all these reasons, it is very important that in every church there should be great attention paid to the study of the Scriptures for their own sake. Bible-classes are next to the pulpit, and are sometimes even far more educating than the pulpit itself. A Bible-class, if properly trained, may at last reach almost every question that ever enters the minister's own study. I think it very desirable that the whole structure and genius of the Bible should be studied, aside from its essential contents. The prevalent infidelity and doubt, the sneers that are thrown at sacred things, the talk that men hear of discords in the Bible, undermine the confidence of a great many persons unnecessarily. I know of but one remedy, and that is a clear, bold study of the thing itself. If there were a man in my parish who was an acute infidel, I would secure his presence in the class, if I had nobody else. I would show the young people of my parish either that the

difficulties were only apparent, and were solvable, or else that they so inhere in the infinite nature of the subjects discussed as to belong to all views of those subjects, whether religious or not. At any rate, I would produce the impression either that the infidel objections were not true, or that the trouble lay in my own ignorance and incapacity to answer. But to leave the impression in the community that the minister has got his church around him, and is cuddled there, and that it is his professional interest to stand up for his book, and that his book is susceptible of being riddled if you could only get fair play at it, — if you allow this, you produce latent scepticism throughout your congregation. Therefore, have courage, and allow fair discussion. Let in light, let in air. If there is any book that will bear it, it is the Bible. I think, therefore, that the discussion of the structure of the Scriptures, the nature of inspiration, — its metes and bounds and varieties, and the inferences deducible from it, — all these questions, which are to-day so much in the very air, you must meet. If you do not go to meet them, they will come and take you captive.

VARIOUS METHODS OF BIBLE STUDY.

Consider also the Scriptures from beginning to end, taking them as a matter of history and as a matter of literature, following the text *seriatim*. (I am speaking of different methods in Bible-classes, of which sometimes one, sometimes the other, is to be taken.) Or, instead of taking the Evangelists in course, and then some of the letters of Paul or John, men might take, in the course of the Bible-classes, such topics as the

great questions of conscience; the questions of faith, courtesy, hope, love, temper, selfishness, disinterestedness, and a thousand subjects of that kind. That is, events that are occurring in the community, the thousand ethical difficulties or incidents that come up in daily life in the community, might be considered in their relation to the Scriptures, you yourself being all the time the guide and director; so that, in one way or another, you will have pretty much the whole course of life brought out in the most familiar way in the Bible-class. You will be able, in this way, to touch elements that no man can reach in a sermon.

ADVANTAGE OF PERSONAL TEACHING.

When I was in Birmingham, I went in to see how they manufactured *papier-maché*, and I saw the vast machinery and the various methods by which it was blocked out and made. I watched the various processes from room to room, until I came to the last, where is given the finishing touch, the final polish. They told me that they had tried everything in the world for polishing, and at last had been convinced that there was nothing like the human hand. There was no leather or other substance that they could get hold of, that had such power to polish to the very finest smoothness, as this living leather in its vital state, — the human hand. It is very much so with people. You can teach them from the pulpit in certain large ways, but there are some things that you cannot do except by putting your very hand on them and working them down, polishing them off by hand. In the Bible-class, where all sorts of questions and

thoughts and feelings come out, and where various tastes lead to all sorts of matters, you can put your hand out and bring the truth into all crevices, nooks, and corners of human thought and feeling and imagination, as you cannot do in a sermon.

Of course, it will require on your part no small range of knowledge. He that knows the Bible well knows pretty much all the world, not in the more modern developments and disclosures, but in ancient history, ethnography, geography; in a thousand questions of manners and customs, of ethics, of equities, of general law and legislation. All these come into the illustration of Scripture; and a minister that carries on a Bible-class,—a live one,—and has in it people who have heads, and are not afraid to speak, will find that he has to use his study abundantly. I should not wonder if you found that, for years, in the beginning of your ministry, the Bible-class taxed you with more study than your sermons. But it is worth the cost. Your people will be rooted and grounded in the truth, when that truth has been derived from the direct study of the Word of God. Truth will have to them a vitality and an authority which it cannot have when it comes from *you*, even under the most favorable circumstances.

In the institution and conduct of the Bible-class, one of the difficulties to be overcome, after the listlessness and general indifference have passed away, will be a controversial spirit, which will often rise up, especially when you have persons who have been catechetically instructed. Almost invariably, the questions put at first are out-of-the-way questions of mere curiosity, and of no value; or else there will be questions of

abstract moral government. Men will want to go at once right into Decrees, Foreordination, Election, Reprobation, or something of that sort, and you will have to guard your Bible-class from the tendency to purely intellectual debating. For, while doctrinal discussion ought to be in order, and it is worth while to make provision for the discussion of such questions by themselves, when you can lay out the subject, and invite questions, and be prepared to go into the whole matter, yet, when a class has been instituted for all sorts of people, it is very unwise to let it take on a controversial habit. Now, there is a difficulty here. I have a man who is active, self-sacrificing, excellent, and who works among the poor all the time; but his ideas are very curious, and he is incisive in his thought, and at every teachers' meeting he wants to put questions on passages of Scripture and carry the meeting off into philosophical discussion. Now, the object of the head of the school is to prepare his teachers to edify their scholars, and he does not wish to invite doctrinal disquisition, or to become an antagonist; and yet, to stop that man's mouth looks very much as if he were afraid to defend his own ground, or as if he did not want free discussion. It will require a good deal of wisdom and tact and management to go right. One way to meet the case is to come to a fair understanding with the person, by personal conversation with him. There are a great many men that will help you, if you confide in them; but if you do not, they will hinder you. If there were half a dozen of this kind, I should call them together in my study, and say to them: "Now, gentlemen, you are acute, I see; your minds are active, and

you have a great deal of curiosity on this or that subject. I want to do so and so with my Bible-class. This is my plan, and I want your help. I will agree, as far as in me lies, to meet your desires. I will have other meetings, which shall be especially for discussion, and you shall have free range; but in these others I want you to help, and not hinder me." Thus I throw myself on their confidence and honor. Most men that would come to a Bible-class at all would respond to such an appeal as that, and would help you. But don't set up your authority. Don't use your spiritual bludgeon. Don't say to a man, "Sit down, sir!" Don't ridicule a man, or shut up his mouth by authority, because you are a minister. It is the worst possible policy. No policy will surely keep you out of difficulties, young gentlemen. I don't care how much you know beforehand of management, you have all of you got to carry burdens; you have got to learn a good deal by failures, stumbling, and falling into pit-holes. I only give you a few hints and suggestions as to these things, leaving you to use your good sense in extricating yourselves from the difficulties which you will find in carrying on a successful Bible-class.

Now, allow me to say, I have found in my ministry much benefit from the Bible-class, — more benefit, in many respects, than from anything else. In my own early ministry, instead of having a Bible-class, — for I had not good material to work into one, — I lectured on the Bible. I took up the Scriptures *seriatim*. The whole of the New Testament I went through by lectures. I think I have now, somewhere on my shelves at home, the lectures I prepared thirty years ago, in

which I went over pretty much the whole of the New Testament, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. I asked for questions, sometimes provoked questions, but mainly I expounded the Scriptures myself. Circumstances were such, in my early ministry, as to make this course desirable. During my settlement in Brooklyn, I have had so much preaching to do, and have had so many helpers raised up around me, that I have been able to put this work upon others; and the Bible-classes, which have been a constituent part of our school system, have been more blessed than almost any other part of the labor in our church. We have three Sunday-schools, — the Home School, the Bethel, and the Plymouth Mission. In the Home School, we have about eight or nine hundred children, and from a hundred and fifty to two hundred young men over fifteen years of age. In the Bethel we have about one thousand scholars, and in the Bible-class about two hundred married men; also a class of married women, of about one hundred or one hundred and fifty. In the Plymouth Mission, there are four or five hundred scholars, and nearly one hundred in the Bible-classes. The admissions to the church-membership have ranged from a hundred to two hundred and fifty or three hundred; and probably from one third to one half of them have been by conversions from the world; and I may say four fifths of them have come through the Sunday-schools and the Bible-classes. So that the body of the members who have been brought in have been trained, and brought to a personal avowal of a religious faith and an entrance upon a religious life, by the influence of the Bible-class.

This Bible-class of married men is a phenomenon.

The gentleman who teaches it was a soldier, who lost his arm in the service. He is singularly well fitted for this work. He had a large number of poor, plain, but excellent men; but they were not all such. He has gathered up from the street the degraded, the literally lost. At first his class was small, — nine or ten; but he worked with them faithfully, and set them to gathering up their abandoned companions. Among those brought in were drunkards, pimps, the most degraded and despicable. There were men that by their careless habits had wasted their earnings and disbanded their families. Some of them were living in filth and vice, and some in crime. And yet, last January, about a hundred of these men came up in a body and called upon me, and a better looking set of men I never beheld. They were clothed and in their right mind. We received at one time some forty into the church, out of this body of men; and one of the most affecting things I know of is that this class, two or three times a year, gives an entertainment to all the parents of the children in the Bethel Mission. They give it themselves. We furnish the room and lights, but they order a supper, with cake, confections, ice-cream, tea, and coffee. They have music, and also some little amusement — tableaux, or something of the kind — got up for them. They invite all the fathers and mothers of the children in the Bethel Mission. Each of the members of the Bible-class wears his little rosette to show he is a manager, and each one is expected to be on the floor to entertain the guests and to see that every one is happy, comfortable, talked to, and fed. To see these hundred and fifty men, — one of whom said, in relating his experience, "I know all

about rum. I have made it, I have sold it, and I have drunk it to the very uttermost," — to see such men in the house of God, entertainers, calling in the parents of the poor wandering children, is enough to make tears come from anybody's eyes.

I don't believe you ever could have reached those men except by taking the Word of God in your hand, calling them together in a place where they felt at home, and then going step by step with them through the truth, teaching them Sunday after Sunday; and, while you are doing this, calling out their sympathies, making them work for each other, — for that is what this class is still doing, — one here and one there, raising contributions by which they are able to sustain men and get them on their feet till they can get work again. There have been literally hundreds of families regathered.

I have one teacher in my Home School, — I should be within bounds if I should say that in ten years he has been the instrument of converting one hundred and fifty young men, and chiefly by the application of the truth as it is in Jesus, in the Bible-class; and I have found that, while our Sunday-schools are greatly blessed, there has been no other agency employed in our church that is comparable to our Bible-classes for adults, young men and old.

CAUSE OF THE PROSPERITY OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

The history of Plymouth Church, as viewed, would seem to be a history of excitement and curiosity. The reason of the prosperity of that church has been simply the abundant, continuous, faithful, humble working of the members of the church, year after year. There is

an immense amount of life among the members. They are seeking to follow Christ in a humble, working spirit, and that has made the history of the church.

MISSION SCHOOLS.

A few words on the subject of mission schools. These are highly desirable in large cities, where so many of the neighborhoods are neglected, and are not able to support a church. Such neighborhoods can be better reached under the Methodist system than under our own, unless we employ some such auxiliaries as mission schools. I regard mission schools as the tenders of the fleet. Our churches are men-of-war; our mission schools are little steam-yachts that these men-of-war send out into the shallower waters, or where they cannot go. Every city church ought to have one or two chickens of this kind under its wing.

WHERE TO ESTABLISH MISSIONS.

There are, in the establishment of these mission schools, two or three principles that I think should be borne in mind as the foundations of all success. First, a mission school ought not, in my judgment, to be placed in a slum. If you are going into neighborhoods where there is degradation and vice, and all manner of nastiness and rottenness, it is not best to preach the gospel there permanently. Go in to them, and visit them; but if you are to establish an institution, draw people out of the midst of that miry pit on to the edge of virtue and neatness and order. It will be easier to draw people out of disorder up to the borders of order, than to teach them in the midst of their disorder.

There is something in going out of their ill-ventilated houses, their unlighted, dirty streets, up to a place which is quiet, which has some element of beauty about it. It becomes attractive to them, and they will like to do it, provided they think the place is still within easy reach, and is their own.

THE SCHOOL NOT TO BECOME A CHURCH.

Next, I affirm that a mission school, as a general thing, should remain a mission school. I refuse utterly to allow any of our schools to be nascent churches. Not that it may not be a good way to send out a school, and thus prepare the way for a church. There are many cases in which that is a proper thing to do. But ordinarily, in outlying neglected neighborhoods, mission schools are better for the people than churches ; for this reason, that they really are churches in the primitive sense of the term, and that the mode of instruction obtaining there is better adapted to the wants of that class of people than is the instruction which they would be likely to get in a church of the ordinary pattern. Our churches tend to extinguish sociality. Their congregations are respectable. They rise high in many elements ; but the low, the poor, the ignorant, the vicious, are not susceptible yet of these higher things. Where they are brought into our churches, they are lonesome, they are little interested, and are very soon left behind. But if you send intelligent men and women down into their midst to put them into classes, and then to do the work face to face, looking to the individual man, calling him by name, going over to where you can lay your hand on him, you are rubbing in

the truth in a manner that just suits his unsusceptible nature. You are giving to each man as he needs, not comprehensively as a whole congregation needs.

BENEFIT TO TEACHERS.

There is another reason. I regard these mission schools as the nurseries for training the teachers themselves. All the good we have done to the poor and ignorant in Brooklyn is not comparable with that which has been done to my own people in the process. It would be enough, if only this one thing had fallen out, that the young men and women in my parish had been for years and years giving some of their best time, their best thoughts, their freshest hours, their sweetest enthusiasm, their most disinterested charities. They have gone down into the field and made the work of taking care of these men their own work. There are, and have been, many children of wealth and culture engaged in this mission work, who give up to it not only hours in each single day, meeting in council, — meeting in little evening parties that have been arranged for this purpose, — but pretty nearly the whole of their Sunday, except the hour of our morning service; and who carry this on for five or ten years, — fascinated with it, I might say. Now, this building up of these persons makes them worth a hundred times as much to society and to the church as they would be, had they merely been recipients, going with open mouth, always eating, and never using the strength which came from digested food. These missions at home keep alive the disinterestedness of men to such a degree that I have come near to think that the church which has no mission

feeling in it, no impetus to go outside of itself, no thought of anything except how to take care of itself, is scarcely a Christian church. I do not think that vital piety is long to be sustained in any body of men gathered together for church services, where there is no mission spirit, — that is, a spirit of disinterested labor for those who cannot repay you.

CHURCH SELFISHNESS.

Our mission schools have also accomplished another thing for which I am very grateful. I am ashamed to see great churches, whose wealth is counted by millions, build themselves stately houses, give to them everything that can make them comfortable in the pew, attractive in the choir, eloquent and desirable in the pulpit, and when they have done, pay their minister and all the expenses liberally, and then sit themselves down and fold around themselves the robe of complacency, saying, "There, if the Lord don't think we have done well, he is unreasonable." What have they done but for themselves? They have embellished the chariot which is carrying them to heaven, as they think, — though sometimes that is a mistake. They have simply made provision for their own religious enjoyment.

Churches gather together families, and take care of them. They are institutions for families. They forget all outside of their own walls; they forget the community in which they are, which is under their care. If some few of their members are stirred up to open a mission school in a destitute neighborhood, what usually happens? With very little interest on the part of the majority of the church, a few disinterested persons go

down among the poor, and hire a hall. They have to pay almost all of the rent out of their own pockets. They have a dilapidated hall, neither carpeted nor decorated, gaunt and drear; and they gather together there a few on Sundays, teaching them the best way they can. And this is the offering of that church to the poor! That starveling band of teachers, in a little miserable, wretched, out-of-the-way place, — that is what they give! They themselves sumptuously fed, living in a gospel palace, having nothing neglected which their hearts or tastes could wish; yet, when they come to the poor, they take the scraps and moldy rinds to give to them.

Now, I hold that every church which wants to do good should give, not what it has left over, or what it stingily thinks it can spare, to the poor. That which you give to the poor ought to represent that which God has done for you; it ought to represent the freshness, beauty, art, and sweetness which prevail in the household of the givers.

When, therefore, we wanted to build our Bethel, when application was made to us, as a church, to take the school off the hands of those who had been carrying it, I gathered the people together, and said to them, "It is to be determined to-night by vote whether you shall take this school and care for it; but if you do, I want you to understand what you must do. I will not consent to the taking of this school as a poor, lame poverty school. You must build for them better quarters than you have for yourselves, and must treat that school so that they shall have, in the very offerings you bring to them, some sense of the richness which Chris-

tianity has brought to you." They assented to it. Now, our own church is not to be compared for beauty and embellishment with the Bethel. That building, with the ground, cost us some eighty thousand dollars. The free reading-room is filled with pleasant pictures. In the appropriate rooms, we have all the elements of housekeeping that are necessary. The teachers once a month have their tea there together. Every quarter the schools have a festival there. It is a complete little household, in all its appointments. Every part of it is fine in taste, ample and excellent in the quality and quantity of the things provided. We spare nothing for them. We have given them as good an organ as Mr. Hook can build. We spend five thousand dollars a year for the expense of running that school. It is entirely a free-will offering. Whatever they contribute goes to mission work. In so far as the school is concerned, we have made it no second-class car, while we are riding to heaven in the first-class. We have given them the first, and take our chances in the second.

Now, where you organize disinterestedly in this way, and give the gospel, not in its lean, meager development, in its poverty and wretchedness; where you give the gospel in its inflorescence, in that state in which it has had time to root and grow and blossom; where you embody the gospel in all its brightness and beauty, as the source of all that is joyous in your own house, — take that down to them; send with it your best children, your ripest and sweetest, your most disinterested. Let these make themselves at home with the poor, and be to them, week by week, their counsellors and advisers.

Come in with me, on Friday afternoon, which is the

afternoon for prayer among the women, and for the telling of their wants. It is enough to melt a heart of stone. That little saintly woman who presides there, whose name I will not mention, is to them, as it were, what the Virgin Mary is to the more devout and intelligent Catholics. Her ears are open to all their troubles. If one has a sick child or a sick husband, if one has had a death in a family, if a husband has been abusive, if there is discouragement, if the boys have turned out badly, — whatever their troubles, it is their privilege to come there, Friday afternoon, and make known all their wants. This woman sympathizes with them, counsels them, looks after them, comforts them. And this work is going on all the time, from year's end to year's end. There is no vacation in that school. Our Home School has a vacation, because our scholars are all children of prosperous parents; but poverty knows no vacation. The grief and sorrow that come in the lower walks of life know no intermission. We always keep open this house of refuge, to which all the poor and the needy come. I tell you, it keeps the hearts of my people very soft and sweet. There is a revival feeling in the church all the time, coming very largely from the effects of our mission work.

I have said that the best thing in our church was the Bible-class. Well, the best thing in our church is the Mission class! Whichever one you think of last is the best.

LAY PREACHING.

This leads me to speak of the lay element in churches. I have already somewhat anticipated that subject. I

am satisfied, gentlemen, that you are never going to have professional ministers enough to convert the world, — never. You have got to have the whole church preach, or you will never cover the ground. The population increases a great deal faster than ministers do, especially in the outlying territories. Just think of the idea of attempting to closely follow up that rush of emigration, and the opening of those vast intermediary and far-away States and Territories, with schools and churches and professional ministers. You never can do it. In this intelligent age of the world, I do not understand why a layman has not just as much right to be a public teacher as a minister has. He knows as much; he averages as well. He does not undertake to conduct an organization in all its details, and to be a leader; but, in his sphere, he is prepared to preach the gospel. There are many men in the law, in medicine, in mercantile business, many teachers in schools, many men retired from active business life, who are competent to take this, that, or the other neighborhood, and maintain service from Sabbath to Sabbath. Able lecturers they are upon education; able lecturers they may be upon temperance; and they may just as well preach also sermons that have in them the root of the gospel. There was a time when it was feared that they might err from ignorance. But we have learned to trust men. At least, the democratic idea has been introduced into the church; and we have learned to have great trust and confidence in men. It is said that laymen by their rash speaking endanger the truth. As though there never was any rash speaking among ministers, and never any endangering of the truth among them!

It is said that they will run wide of common-sense. As if all ministers were always in the line of common-sense! "Oh but," it is said, "ministers are rectified; the class spirit brings them up, and they are watched over." Just as though public sentiment would not bring the others up, and as though they could not be rectified! The very work that a man is engaged in has the element of rectification in it. Let men not be persecuted, let them not be questioned, let them not be nettled and irritated; for getting mad, if not the father, is the grandfather, of all the heresy in the world! Men think differently from you, and then you hit them, and then they say, "Now I will stand to it." And they fight for their opinion; so that the anger that is excited by opposition is the cause of the permanency of many and many an aberration that has taken place in the church. If you had let men alone, if you had left them at liberty, they would have exhaled much that was obnoxious; it would have cured itself. Men need the work; the field needs them. They are not only to be trusted, but I think that, being trusted, they will average as well as the great multitude of ministers in the kind of work to which they turn their hand.

WORK IN ONE'S OWN FIELD.

That is not all. I think we must have more work from laymen in their own business and in their own professions. A banking-house is the banker's parish; the landlord has his parish in his hotel; the judge has his parish in the bar, and among the people that are before the bar and behind it. Wherever men are, there is their sphere of work. I knew a man who was en-

gaged in business in Wall Street. Certain transactions on the part of certain young men of character and family came before him. He drew them aside and talked to them. He talked to them as a Christian man and as a father should. The effect on them was overwhelming. It was the cause, apparently, of an entirely different style of manhood in them from that upon which they had been entering. If I had said those things to them, they would have said, "Oh, of course; he says so because that is his business; we expect that from a minister; but he don't understand much about business." But here was an old business man, universally looked up to in the street; and when he talked godliness to those young men, it meant something. If I were to see a young buck spend his nights in dissipation, drinking, and all manner of license, and should go and talk to him, he would say, "I thank you; you mean well, no doubt, Mr. Beecher." And he would say, after I had gone away, "The minister has been to talk to me, and he was a good old fellow"; and he might be very grateful. But suppose a man of the world who had gone through much, a man of society, not altogether clear himself, — suppose he should take that young man, and say, "Now, Thomas, let me just tell you something; it won't do, it won't do!" Let *him* talk, and it will make a hundred times greater impression, especially if he is known to have had some experience in these evil courses, but has come out of them and cleansed himself, and stands high in truth and honor. When I went yesterday from the lecture, a man met me and asked me, "You know Mr. So-and-so?" "Yes," — he was the landlord of a hotel. Said

this person, "That man led me to Christ." "How was that?" "Well, said he, "he took me and talked to me." I inquired of the landlord afterwards, and he said it was so. He saw that the other was living very wickedly, and he talked to him, and told him he was going to the bad. The man looked up in his face in utter amazement, and said, "You, a landlord, talk to me so?" "Yes," said the landlord, "I do talk to you so." It made an impression upon his mind that no minister ever could have made.

Now, I hold that there are some things which can be said by each man in his own field, and by nobody else than the man in that place, and that our lay force ought to be developed in the church and out of the church, so as to supplement and carry out the preaching of the pulpit. That pastorate which does not make the most of all the laymen and laywomen in the church and in the congregation is imperfect by just so much. Many of you, perhaps most of you, will disagree with me in the matter of woman's preaching, but you have got to come to it; and I only throw it out incidentally now, not to argue it, but merely to say that coming events cast their shadows before; and when the time comes, and you see that it is the proper thing to do, you will remember I told you you would have to come to it.

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS.

One word as to Young Men's Christian Associations. I think, in large cities, there is a sphere for them. In country places, I don't see what they are but men's churches. I think that the young men and young

women of the church should form young people's associations in the church. To form them with separate organizations, with elaborate buildings and large machinery, may be wise in large cities, but in country towns no reason for it exists. As a universal system, therefore, extending all over the land, I doubt if there is a necessity for it; I doubt the wisdom and expediency of it. But, as a special organization in our large cities, I think it is eminently wise. But what ought these associations to do? What is their business? If it be preaching to the young men, if it be conducting prayer-meetings, — why, the church does that, and it had better be done in the churches. If it be merely getting together classes and giving them free instruction in Italian, Spanish, French, mathematics, mechanics, — why, we have multitudes of institutions that are doing that. Why need there be a Young Men's Christian Association to duplicate that work? If, however, there is a work set on foot for mutual guardianship and protection, and mutual combined effort to procure occupation for those who are out of it, — an association for taking care of the sick, or for watching the children that come from the country into the city; if, more than that, the Young Men's Christian Associations provide in the cities lawful amusements in suitable places, so that, if a man goes to unlawful, injurious amusements, he does it because he wants to go there, and not because he needs to go there; if they give to young men modes of honorable and manly athletic exercise; if they visit the jails; if they look after the various asylums; if they become auxiliaries of the officers of the law; if they trace out lotteries and obscene

and abominable publications, — if they attempt to do these neglected things, which church organizations are not well fitted to do, there may be a large sphere of usefulness for them. Otherwise, I scarcely know why men should go to the expense, pains, and labor of forming an organization for prayer-meetings, or any other of those things which could be just as well developed in their church connections.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Do you think the positive religious cast of the Young Men's Christian Associations hinders them ?

Mr. Beecher. — I do not know that it hinders them, because the strictly religious element is entirely a matter of option, and the other things in the organization can be taken without the prayer-meeting. They do not do as they used to sometimes on shipboard, when sailors were not allowed grog unless they came to prayer-meetings. The different features are disconnected.

Q. Would you have as teachers for your Sabbath-school persons who are not members of the church ?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, sir; I would. I hold that no man or woman who goes into a Sunday-school to teach, can teach long without becoming a Christian. I would do it as a means of grace to the teacher. So far as the scholar is concerned, the teaching will, for the most part, be correct in idea and general feeling, because in our Christian society and our age of the world, young men and young women are educated in such a way as to carry with them a vast amount of Christian feeling and Christian ethics. I do not believe that a man before he is converted is a heathen. I think there

is a law in the household, in the principles and customs of society, a reflex light of Christianity, shining in upon us from every side of human society ; and there is not a young man or young woman among us who does not possess a vast amount of the real Christian element. The fountain needs to be opened through which the supply shall come perennially from God. Nevertheless, a person not fully a Christian may have been trained so that he is competent to convey Christian influence and ideas to a class. The attempt to move another mind toward God is one of the most solemn things that any man ever undertakes in this world, one of the fruitful things, and the most quickly blest. I was never in my life brought so near to God by prayer, or by reading, or by anything else, as I have been by the disclosure of the wants of a soul that came to me for succor and relief. It has exalted me immeasurably higher than any other instrumentality in the world. I do not believe that a young man or a young woman, conscientious and susceptible, can sit before a class of eager, palpitating children for many weeks, and not feel the arrow in his soul.

Q. Do you believe in graded teaching in Sabbath-schools, such as we have in day schools ?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, sir ; whenever you are in circumstances where you can apply that principle.

Q. Would you have teachers in Sabbath-schools who believed in Universalism ?

Mr. Beecher. — Not to teach it. That is, I should say a man is not honest who would go into an Orthodox church and teach Universalism in the Sabbath-school,

when he knew that that was not the faith of the church, and not the faith of the school. If I believed in Universalism ever so much, and went into an Orthodox school, I would teach everything but that; I would not teach that. If I were invited to preach for a Methodist, do you suppose I would go into his pulpit and preach Calvinism, even if I preached it at home? There is a principle of equity and courtesy always to be observed.

Q. Would you have the pastor or the superintendent conduct the teachers' meeting?

Mr. Beecher. — The pastor, if he can, unless there is a better man, which is not unfrequently the case. I hold that you have a right to the gifts of everybody in your church. There is not a man in my church that I have not a right to. If he is oak, I have a right to him when I want oak; and if he is pine, I have a right to him where pine is the best thing.

Q. In Bible-classes, do you recommend question-books, or merely taking a text?

Mr. Beecher. — Either way, whichever happens to be the best. Sometimes, a question-book. I remember Cogswell's Question-Book on Divinity, and that I enjoyed the use of it before I went into the ministry; and I have known great good to be done by it; sometimes by doing as old Dr. Humphrey did with Parry, — tearing it to pieces; and sometimes by following it and teaching according to it.

Q. Would it not be better to leave the question-book and take the text?

Mr. Beecher. — What should prevent your doing

sometimes the one thing and sometimes the other? Routine is to be avoided. Infinite variety, continual change, that is the course of nature, and that is the course of human nature in society. Generally it is not the course in churches, and that is the bane of churches. We run too much into regular routine. In most churches, I would not have a Bible-class all the year round. I would continue it as long as it ran fresh and deep; but if I saw it begin to fail, I would say, "Brethren, we will adjourn this class for four months. We will go over the harvest season, — or over so long a time. We don't want to run this thing into the ground. We don't want to gorge ourselves." I would not have a person come to prayer-meeting or Bible-class because he thought he must. I would try to take off the sense of bondage and make things free and pleasant, make men come to church because it is sweet to come to church. In order to keep things fresh and lively, a hundred expedients must be taken. Never let a prayer-meeting die, and then lay it out in tears. Kill it.

Q. Would n't that be murder?

Mr. Beecher. — Well, sir, I have an opinion that discriminating and judicious murders are beneficial.

Q. Would you have those lay preachers formally examined and set apart?

Mr. Beecher. — I would examine them in this way: I would see, after they had gone to work, what they did. And if they did good work, I should say, Go on. If they did not, I would examine to see whether they probably could do good work; and if I found they could by a little instruction and help, I would give it to them.

I would induce the sense of voluntariness and freedom just as far as I possibly could, restraining it only at the point where I thought it needed restraint.

Q. Do you have foreigners in your school ?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, sir ; a great many of them. We reach the boys largely. We have two reading-rooms that are free, one for boys and one for men. One free reading-room for men — which is lighted and warmed, and made as cheerful as possible, and which accommodates an average of eighty or a hundred every night — was first established. Then the boys wanted to come, and we had no accommodations for them; so we had the whole basement cleaned out, floored, lighted, ventilated, and decorated, and then we provided for the boys books, papers, and magazines, illustrated publications particularly. The boys that came in there were so low that we actually put them in first through the bath-room. We made them wash their faces and comb their hair. Some of them were so low that when they saw each other with hair combed and faces washed, they laughed as though it were the best joke of the season. We had to have policemen to keep the building in order, so wild were they. And yet after they once understood that there was law and power, we took the policemen all away as soon as possible, and threw the responsibility of good order upon the boys themselves. They responded to it, and, through all the later period, we have had just as good order among the boys as among the men. Now these were, to a boy, foreigners ; there was not an American boy in the whole lot. And that is not all ; there was hardly a Protestant boy in the whole lot.

Q. Did you give them amusements?

Mr. Beecher. — We did. We gave them checker-boards, and taught them how to play with them. We could n't very well teach ball, or billiards, or tenpins, down in that little building, but we taught them checkers, which they could play.

Q. How would you treat Sunday-school scholars that are persistently disorderly?

Mr. Beecher. — Well, that is a pretty tough question. In a Sunday-school class that is persistently disorderly, it might come to such a pass that you would be obliged to exclude single boys among them; but I think that patient continuance in loving sympathy and kindness would subdue almost any class. At least, if it did n't do any good to the boys, it would to the teacher.

Q. You spoke of the conversion of a great many of the young men. What was the habit of the teachers in respect to the visitation of those at their homes, besides their instruction in school?

Mr. Beecher. — I cannot say as to that. I only know that, wherever there was sickness and trouble, the teacher or teachers knew of it, and visited there. In other words, there was a perfect system of pastoral care in our Bethel Mission School. The parish is so large that I am bishop now, you know, and my curates, or under-ministers, perform the functions of the ministry. So, if I cannot be had, the superintendent of the Home School is competent to go to the funeral of any of the people in that school, and minister to edification. The superintendent of the Bethel Mission, too, is competent, and there are others who are active

and able. The people receive it, because these are the persons who are teaching them, who are all the time doing them good. And when there is sickness or death in the house, these are the very persons whom they like to see. I have twenty men who, I believe, if you were to send them anywhere on the two continents, would not stay a month without establishing what was equivalent to a church center, and they would administer ordinances and go forward with the whole work of the gospel; because I teach everybody that preaching, ordinances, everything, is subordinate to manhood, and that he who is a man in Christ Jesus owns all things. Sunday does not own him, the church does not own him; he owns Sunday, he owns the church, he owns the Bible, he owns the ordinances; and any man who has faith in Christ and love to God, and who sees there is an opportunity of doing good by it, has a right to distribute emblems, bread and wine, to anybody who needs them. It is the Christ in him that gives him authority over everything else. There is a great deal of power obtained by bringing up a set of men who believe this, and practice it too.

VIII.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVIVALS.

TWO EXTREMES OF OPINION.

I PURPOSE this afternoon to begin the consideration of the general subject of revivals. There are, besides the intermediate view, two extreme opinions which are entertained on this important topic. On the one side, there are those who regard the existence of revivals as perhaps, in our day, the most eminent instance of immediate Divine presence that is vouchsafed to the world. They are regarded with a reverence that borders even upon superstition. Often one would think, by what men utter, that not only were revivals out of the course of nature, but that ordinary laws were so suspended in them that our experience in other relations threw but very little light upon the questions connected with them. At the opposite extreme are those who regard revivals of religion as the most remarkable exhibitions of morbid emotion which can now be found; believing that, if they do not spring from Satanic influence, they yet represent the wildest and most spasmodic forms of unregulated human feeling and fantasy.

THE HISTORIC VIEW.

I purpose to-day to enter upon some general considerations, showing on what grounds I believe in revivals of religion, and answering many of the objections which exist in the minds of those who do not believe in them or labor for them. Looking back over history, we find that all nations have been subject to great swells of impassioned feeling; that these impetuous outbreaks have not been casual and meaningless, but have been intimately connected with some of the most important steps that the world has made; that they stand in close relations to civil policy; that they are intimately connected with commercial impulse and prosperity; that they have their place in the realm of art; that they belong to literature; that they spread, in short, over so much of human history as to take in, from first to last, every part of the human mind and its experiences.

THE REVIVAL ELEMENT IN JUDAISM.

As we all think that the Hebrew history has in it something more sacred than any other; as Matthew Arnold holds that the Hebrews were employed by Divine Providence to develop more perfectly than any other nation the great, deep, moral sentiments, — it is very interesting to look back and see how largely the substantial element of religious revivals entered into their economy. I do not need to dwell on prodigious outbursts like that which took place when Elijah gathered together all the prophets of Baal, and introduced new measures with a vengeance, and slew them all.

That, of course, was not a revival of pure and undefiled religion, in any such sense as we understand by the phrase in modern times; but certainly it was a wild effort of the people to throw off the domination of idolatry. They were inspired to a more generous thought of God and of their own religion, and to a momentary detestation of the oppressive idolatry that was fixed upon them by the royal family.

I need not point to those great popular uprisings that took place in the rebuilding of the temple, in the rescuing of the nation from foreign bondage. I point especially to this, that the revival economy, in its essential element, was incorporated into the Mosaic system. For I hold that the three great annual visits of the whole Jewish male population to Jerusalem were substantially nothing more than "protracted meetings" held by the whole population of Judæa. The entire people was assembled at the three great feasts, and we have record of the transporting effects which often took place when they all mingled together, and the whole national heart throbbed in unison to the same thought and the same feeling. It was a saying among the old Jewish writers, that he who had never been present at one of the days, — a certain day in the Feast of the Tabernacles, I think it was, — and seen the rejoicing on that day, could not know what joy was. For the Jews, I had almost said, deified enjoyment. In the Hebrew literature there are expressions of joy, from the lowest up to the very highest rapture, such as I find nowhere in modern literature; and they are intimately connected with the development of religious life. Now, these great festivals of the Jews were really organized

national institutions for the promotion of revivals. This will be more apparent when we come to look particularly into the nature and operation of the revival spirit.

REVIVALS IN CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

At a later period, if you will look closely into the life of the Saviour, I think you will find that during pretty nearly all of his Galilean life, — which was, I suspect, more than two thirds of the whole of his ministerial life, — the people around him were in what can be regarded only as a state of religious revival. That is to say, there was such an excitement of the whole population wherever he went, that all other things fell into the background, and the mass of the people gave way to one feeling and one impulse, following him. And wherever he went, it was so. When he went up to Jerusalem, it was scarcely less marked than in Galilee. After his conflicts in the Temple, he was driven out for a time and took refuge in Perea, or across the Jordan. And, although we have almost no topographical details of his residence there, it would seem that, in the multitude of parables that there fell out from him, this period transcended any other in his whole life. It was there and then that some of the most stupendous of his miracles, as well as the greatest number of them, seem to have taken place. The same things, it would seem, took place at the other side of the Jordan. So it is fair, I presume, to say that the whole of the Saviour's ministerial life, at least the part of it that stands on record, was passed in what we may call substantially a revival work.

REVIVALS IN MODERN TIME.

Now we know that, in subsequent periods, the church was subject to these great Divine freshets, if I may so call them. The rains upon the mountains filled the immediate channels fuller than they could hold, and they overflowed their banks and spread fertility on both sides, clear down to the time of the Reformation, which was itself a grand revival of religion. And, from that time down to this, revivals have been more and more frequent. In our day, revivals of religion are known, I had almost said, in every denomination. There is that leading primitive sect, the Roman Catholic Church: they not only have revivals, but with their usual good sense, having seen how well they work in Protestant churches, they have adopted the principle, and now they have what are called Missions, sending out revival preachers — for they are nothing but that — and holding protracted meetings two and three days, or seven days, if need be, and bringing their flocks, especially the more ignorant portions of them, into precisely those conditions into which we strive to bring men in revival labors.

In the Presbyterian churches, in the Congregational churches, in the Methodist churches, in the Baptist churches, in all the churches of the great sects in the land, excepting perhaps the Episcopal Church, revivals of religion are prevalent. The universality of this phenomenon would lead one to ask, "Is there not something in the human mind itself that leads to such results? Ought we not to look for a philosophical undercurrent in this matter?" I think that if you look

a little at the action of the human mind, you will see that there is the explanation of it.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION.

There are, if I may so say, three states or conditions of excitability in the faculties of men. There is the state of acquiescence, or the latent condition of a faculty: that is, the faculty exists, but there is no automatic action, no habitual response from it. For instance, there are many persons that have a feeble susceptibility to beauty of color; so that if you bring a compound, intense, and solar red to bear upon them, you can strike through the torpor of their taste and make them feel that there is something beautiful in color; but this capacity is low in them, it is sluggish. There are a great many persons who have faculties and affections of various kinds, which are in just that frigid, inactive state, and which require the intensest stimulation to develop them. The reason why uncultivated people like brilliant colors is no other than this: the principle of taste or the sense of beauty in them is so torpid that it requires intensity to bring from it the same response which is, in cultivated people, aroused by a very much milder tone of color. This is a fair analogy for all the faculties of the mind. There is a second state, in which the faculties of men are ordinarily excitable and in even play. Then comes the highest, the automatic form, in which the mind acts spontaneously and of itself. There are hundreds of men who think, when you *pierce* them with incitement to thought. But there are men whose cerebral activity is such that, whether they wish it or not, they are con-

tinually creative. The creative states, the automatic habits, of faculty are the highest.

Now, experience shows that it is not possible to develop these higher forms in the minds of ordinary men, if you take them singly. In other words, you cannot develop the higher feelings to the highest degree, by aiming simply at those faculties. You must stir up the mind in its totality. The passions, the appetites, all the force-giving elements in the mind, — the whole commonwealth of the soul, — has got to hear the trumpet blow, and everything that is in the man, from top to bottom, and from side to side, must wake up, and everything become auxiliary to every other thing in the soul. And here you have the suggestion of a general principle, namely, the necessity to individual faculties of help from collaterals or inferiors. If you take this principle and test its application in a community, you will find that precisely the same law holds good outside of the individual mind, in respect to the great elements of human interest, that exists within the mind as a psychological fact. You will find that the great mass of the community are in such conditions that they cannot rise unless they are socially helped, — they cannot rise alone. There are very few persons in the community, even among those whom we call intelligent men, who are competent to do for themselves any satisfactory amount of thinking. But let them converse; let them walk from morning to evening with those who are interested in the same things (especially if there be as many as three or four), and you shall find that they will avail themselves of this social influence to become far richer and more active thinkers

than they could be by themselves. The same principle works in the elements of moral emotion. Society of feeling helps feeling. There are many of our moral feelings that would almost never act but for auxiliaries. I will take a familiar instance in the case of conscience, a faculty which all have or are supposed to have, and which yet, after all, is far from being a leading faculty. If there are one or two men in a thousand who have the sense of conscience pure and unmingled, then there are more men of genius in conscience than there are in poetry or in art. Nine men in ten, yes, ninety-nine men in one hundred, have their conscience in such a state that it never acts except through some auxiliary feeling. Here is one man who never has any conscience in ordinary things; but when his taste is offended, in other words, when the sentiment of taste as an auxiliary stirs up the moral sense, then he is keenly sensitive to right and wrong. In some communities, and in some churches, you will find that the moral sense is nothing in the world but conscience formed through taste or imagination. That which is beautiful is very likely to be holy to them, and that which is repulsive to taste is thought to be wicked; wickedness covered with all beauty is not so very wicked after all to such men. Their conscience acts through this auxiliary, and takes its colors and hues from it. Again, there are some men who are conscientious, when I present conscience to them in the light of benevolence and sympathy. To a man of benevolence, everything that is cruel is wicked; and anything that has kindness in it can hardly be wrong. There are other men who are affected by the sense of shame and by self-esteem. For instance,

many a man will steal and rob and commit murder, and never have a pang till you catch him, put him in prison, and bring to bear upon him the gaze of the whole community. Then, under the sense of shame and wounded approbativeness, the man begins to look back upon his deeds, and to feel that they were monstrous. It is only the shame that comes in to represent conscience that kindles the flame in him. There are men who, under cover of law, will steal and lie, — in a creditable manner, — and never feel any compunction for it, never feel that they violate any canon of morality. You must put the faculty of self-esteem in these men in such a position that it becomes auxiliary to conscience, and then they begin to have a sense of right and wrong in the matter of truth and of fair dealing. Their conscience interprets through these auxiliaries.

Now, that which takes place within the man, I say, takes place without him. There are in the community vast multitudes of men who, if they are to be roused and made to have any vivid emotion, must be reached by rousing up those about them, so that they shall have these for assistants. If you should put one man before a minister, and let the minister preach to him as Jonathan Edwards would have preached, he could not raise that man to any high level of feeling, or even begin to do it, as he could if there were added to him five hundred other men sitting there together, all receiving the same impulse, and all, through sympathy, radiating the same impulse to each other.

ACCEPTING NATURE'S LAWS.

When you come to look upon the community as it is, to judge of things as they are, and not as they ought to be, you will reason about men as we reason in the garden about plants. I don't go into my grounds and say, "Look here; these hollyhocks ought not to grow taller than daisies; they do, to be sure, but then they ought not to." I never question Nature in that way. On the other hand, I always humbly importune Nature, saying, "Tell me thy will, and then, by obeying, I will command thee." I take everything according to its nature, — the tuberous root, the fibrous root, the ligneous, the herbaceous, the high, the low, the blossoming, — each and every thing according to its nature. Now, in going out into the community, there is nothing that will be more likely to mislead you than that despotic "ought." A man stands in the pulpit and preaches sermons that are away over the head of everybody, and when you expostulate with him he will say, "Oh, they *ought* to come up to such thoughts; they *ought* to like such themes." You have got to work among men as they are. To the weak, you must be weak; to the strong, strong. Among the Jews you must be a Jew, and among the Gentiles you must be as a Gentile. If you can do it half as skillfully as Paul did, — and he could not do it so skillfully but that he was caught a good many times, — you will have more success in your ministry than if you adopt the iron method, and undertake to bring everybody under it. Now, looking upon the subject in this light, knowing these inward tendencies in men, I aver that the contro-

versy between fixed institutions and occasional impulses is one that will very soon be settled.

REGULAR INSTITUTIONS INADEQUATE.

It is said by those who do not believe in revivals, "It is far better that you should preach the gospel regularly, methodically; follow it up by proper visitation and by all manner of appliances; and then you can control the influences and the results. A community that is educated in this way is a great deal better than if it were subject to these starts and impulses and wild phantasms that come in revivals of religion." Now, in the first place, I say that there is not a community on this continent that numbers its population by many thousands, in which the church institutions are sufficient to reach the want of the whole population. The church has not wings broad enough to spread over the whole population and brood it. Even if there were containing power enough in the church edifices, the people do not flow into them. Though the matter has been debated and discussed, and though every means has been taken, the fact remains that the mass of the population — and, if you take the continent, I think I may say two thirds of the population of the continent of America — to-day seldom enter churches. Two thirds of the salvable men do not come within the influence of these regular institutions. What are you going to do for them? Is everything to take the gauge of these fixed, stationary institutions, which have in them almost no elasticity, whose very peculiarity is steadfastness, continuity in the same ways?

I do not undervalue the stated institutions of the

church, — which I take to be the household, or the church itself, with all its schools, and all the schools that are brought immediately under the direct evangelical influence of Christian men. All these are permanent engines doing a great work, which is not to be maligned nor undervalued in the slightest degree, but which is supplemented by another influence, — one which they are seldom able to exert, but which is indispensable for the whole community.

CHURCHES THEMSELVES NEED REVIVING.

Again, I think that stated institutions need revivals just as much as people do outside of them. The tendency of all institutions is to formalism. Regularity begets formalism. The burden and the grief of every man that ever undertook to administer in a college, in a theological seminary, or in a church, — whether with or without liturgy, with or without regular service, — is the constant tendency to wear ruts and to make dead machines of things. One of the crying necessities of the church and of its institutions is, to make provision in some way for the rational, the inspirational. There is a conflict between organization and the irregular but genuine impulses of men. Spontaneity and regularity, or organization, are at war. I say they ought to be friends. I say that while you have your forts and your solid armies, you need also your cavalry, your pickets and skirmishers and light troops of every kind, scouring the whole region around; and that revivals of religion are nowhere else so beneficial and so necessary as where there are strong, intrenched, and highly organized religious bodies. They need just this

counteracting influence. It is purgation to them. It clears off the old humors. It gives to them new life and new strength.

NEEDS OF THOSE WITHOUT THE CHURCH.

I have said that revivals are necessary to the churches themselves. In respect to the great mass of the community that lies outside of the churches they are indispensable; otherwise such people will live and die almost under the eaves of churches, without having experienced any salutary religious influences. I do not now speak of the dregs of society. There you will find a class, the treatment of which is a very difficult problem; but that is another and a different case. Go above these; go among the ordinary, the working, the half-intelligent, the commonly ignorant people. Go into the households. Here and there you will find a shrewd woman; here and there you will find a thoughtful man; but take common folks as they are, and my own impression, from acquaintance with them, is, that there are very few households, outside of Christian churches, that generate moral thoughts, or religious thoughts, or religious impulses. The higher feelings are extremely weak in them. If there is any way by which they can be reached and aroused, it must be by some means through which you can lift the whole community, — something in the nature of these revivals of which we have been speaking.

FANATICISM: HOW PREVENTED.

It is said by those who are not in favor of revivals, that they tend to a wild fanaticism. That is precisely

as if a man should dissuade us from breaking colts and using them on the farm, and on the road, by saying that horses run away. So they do, if they are not well broken or well driven; but I have never regarded that as a satisfactory reason why horses should not be used. A wild, popular impulse may run away with the community. Let me say here, — though I shall have occasion to repeat it more analytically by and by, — revivals of religion are violent and untamable just in the proportion in which they are rare. They become amenable to good management just in the proportion in which they are frequent. Where communities have been absolutely neglected, when the fountains of moral feeling are for the first time in many years broken up, then you may expect catastrophe; then you may expect a flood on the community. The fault lies not in the recurrence of life; it is the long death in which the community has been left that occasions the irregularities. The rebound will be just in proportion to the long decline and apathy. So far is it from necessary that revivals of religion should run to fanaticism, they are the sweetest, the mildest, the most regulable, as they are, in every respect, the most congenial to the best human nature, of all the states of religious feeling that prevail in a community, when they are recognized, prayed for, and dealt with fairly.

LIFE BETTER THAN DEATH.

But it is said that the work that is done by revivals of religion is not to be compared in quality with the work that is done by churches in their ordinary methods. I do not believe it. I do not think that a

man who has been brought into the kingdom of God through the instrumentality of the church is likely to be any better than one who has been brought in through the instrumentality of a great and powerful outpouring of the Divine Spirit. There may be some respects in which he would be even less excellent. One thing is certain, that revivals of religion do bring people up, do inspire their moral nature, do root them out of old soil, do give them an elevation that they had not before. If, as a result of this, there should be here and there miscarriages, here and there instances of failure, is it not so in everything? Does every single head of wheat fill out in the harvest-field? Does all fruit ripen that "sets" in the spring? And is all that which swells till the kisses of summer bring blushes to its cheek, — is all that fit for the bin and for the winter? Is there not much wastage everywhere? Do all people that are brought up in regular church connection turn out well? Are there not failures among the regulars as well as among the militia? It is said that these revivals of religion pour a stream of raw, uncultured men upon the community. No, they do not; those men were in the community before. "Ah! but they are religious now." Then you would rather have them dead in trespasses and sins, and regular, than to have them trying to be better men and scrambling on all fours! When the choice is life or death, let it be life. When Lazarus arose from the grave and came forth, bound hand and foot, what if, before the word was given, "Loose him, and take off his head-piece and his shroud," he had stumbled a little, and the disciples had said, "Well, this raising men from the dead is

not what we thought it was, after all; see how he stumbles!" When men have been dead without knowing it; when men have been long dead, till they stink in their vices and their evil habits, — pride, selfishness, worldliness, — *anything* that puts in them the germ of life is better than that long propriety of damnation! But then, respectability rules in such things.

RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT NOT DANGEROUS.

It is said that, during revivals of religion, men come under great excitement, and do things which they would not do when under the influence of calm reason. That is true. You will notice that nobody is afraid of excitement in politics, though it run so high that it looks as if, at the touch of a spark, there would be a universal conflagration. Nobody is afraid of over-excitement in Wall Street. Nobody is afraid of too high excitement in the ordinary run of social festivities. It is only when men begin to feel that they are sinners before God, and that they need to be born again, and begin to have such a sense of heaven that they cannot bear to lose it; it is only when gross matter begins to die out of sight, and ethereal visions come before the soul, that we hear men croaking, "Moderation! moderation! Let your moderation be known to all men." Moderation in combativeness? "Let that fly!" Moderation in acquisitiveness? "No, no; catch and get, catch and get." Moderation in vanity, moderation in pride, moderation in the ten thousand baser compliances of life? No, nobody is distressed about moderation there. But when there is immoderation in sorrow for sin, when there is excitement, lest men shall

lose their souls, then some begin to be alarmed; they are so afraid that everybody will suddenly become angelic and tumble off the precipice into heaven! Why, that is not the danger; that is not the direction in which you need to set up marks. What if, on a road with an abyss on one side and a cliff on the other, we should put up all the barriers on the cliff side and leave the precipice open; would it be wise? Are we in danger of too much and too continuous excitement in spiritual directions? Do not the sounds of life drown the thunders of eternity in men's ears? Are there not ten thousand boiling caldrons of passion and feeling underneath them? Is not every great interest of society pulling upon them? — the household, the store, the shop, the office, all processes of business and of civil society? Are not men wrecked with the thousand worldly things that are tending to undermine faith, to blind spiritual vision? And is it not a great grace and mercy when, even if it comes with imperfection, — and what man is without it? — there is an excitement that lifts men up out of the slough, lifts them out of all their entanglements?

In early days, in Indianapolis, when the city was first built, an old settler told me the trees were so thick in the streets that he forgot how the sky looked, and, in order to see it, he had to walk a mile down to the White River. There he could look up and see all the sky. He used to go down and look for a long time, it was so refreshing to his eyes. In communities where business is like a thick forest collected overhead, so that one cannot see the stars by night nor the skies by day, when these storms of life come on, — these blessed

irruptions of revival influence, — men are carried, as it were, down to the stream where they can see the whole heavens above them. And what if, under such circumstances, there is some little excitement? Cannot you bear with it, for the ends it looks toward? Anything for life! There is no heresy on earth like lethargy. There is nothing so deadly, so dangerous, here and hereafter, as to go on from month to month in a calm propriety, in an external seeming, and yet to have all the fountains of feeling that bring men home to God shut up and frozen!

But then it is said that, when men come under these impetuous influences, these high-toned feelings, it results in deceptions and in spurious conversions. Certainly it does. I do not know any economy that does not bring out those results. Men that attempt to come into the kingdom of God head-first are just as liable to go wrong as those that go heart-first: I think they are more liable to go wrong. The regular church is to revivals what greenhouses are to the summer. Greenhouses do very well; they make heat; they have their own stove and stoker; all they want is brought into their little space; and when, by and by, the robins and bluebirds come, and the elms begin to bud, and the maples show their tassels, and people say that summer is abroad in the land, the old gardener walks out, and says, "Look here, I don't like this summer. There are no toads in my house, but there will be toads abroad now soon. Snakes don't get in here, this is safe; but there will be snakes in the woods if summer comes. It won't do for us to have this thing all over the land." Summer, if it *does* bring mosquitoes, is more desirable than are greenhouses for vegetation, for fruit, or for anything else.

HIGH FEELING AND CLEAR SEEING.

Then, as to the spuriousness of conversions. In revivals where there has been an ordinary — not an extraordinary, but simply an ordinary — degree of care; where there has been a thorough wedding of feeling and intellection, — and they are never to be divorced, — where the work has been seriously entered upon and judiciously conducted, my impression is that there are fewer mistakes made than under any other circumstances. For this reason: there is never a time when the mind conceives so clearly as when it is acting under high stimulus. Its thoughts are clearer, its intentions are better, its decisions are keener; and if it takes ground, it is far more apt to take ground by decision, that is, real decision, than when it is acting in a low, lethargic state. If you want to weld together two pieces of iron, and you hammer them when they are cold, *you* will be hot before you can get them together so that they will stick. But take them when they are hot and put them together, and they will be welded by a few blows so that they will not break asunder. Get men at a welding heat, and then the way of life and duty becomes simple and plain. First and last, the operations of the mind are more thorough, surer, healthier, and better, in a condition of healthful excitement than in a low state of feeling. I stand for *life*. Life is health and activity.

RELIGIOUS INSANITY.

It is said, "Are not many persons made crazy by the excitement under which they are dealt with in these

revivals of religion?" Yes, some. There are some that would be made crazy by any excitement. But I have been watching in New York and Brooklyn, during all the time that I have been there, now nearly twenty-six years, and I have never had to deal with a person in my congregation that was made insane by religion; and yet I suppose I have conversed with a thousand persons that were under very deep religious impressions. But I have seen man after man, — I could point to nearly twenty within my own personal neighborhood and knowledge, — that have been taken from their stores, and brokers' shops, and other places of that kind, to the retreats for the insane, because of the excitements of business. Twenty men may wear themselves out in business and die, either from softening of the brain or hardening of the heart, and nobody says a word about that! But if, in attempting to live a better life, there are one or two among a thousand, so organized that they cannot bear any excitement, and certainly not such an excitement as religion naturally creates, these are marked and held up as scarecrows.

REVIVALS RAISE THE TONE OF CHURCH PIETY.

But it is said that, by revivals of religion, the church is likely to be filled up with unmanageable masses of men; that revivals, as it were, bolt food into the church, which, if it were taken slowly and by mouthfuls, masticated and digested, would become real strength, but now lies like a burden in the church. Well, my reply to that is this: It is conceivable that, in some circumstances, such a result might follow, and especially in communities that are at a low ebb of moral or intel-

lectual culture. It is quite possible that that might be the case where the administration in the church itself is lax and careless. But where the church is intelligent, and filled with genuine religious feeling, and where there is anything like a proper activity in taking care of the products of the revivals, the membership of the church is raised, not lowered, in moral tone. When an iceberg breaks off from the frozen rivers of the north and comes sailing gradually towards the south, it cools all the waters as it goes, clear down into the temperate latitudes. Its influence is felt even upon the atmosphere. But when southern waters go pouring up the Gulf Stream to the north, they carry heat that is felt in all the atmosphere and in all the seas through the vast circuit, till it beats upon the shores of England, of Norway, and of Sweden. It carries with it something of the tropic summer all the way. When we have revivals of religion and receive multitudes into the church, they are not icebergs; they are Gulf Streams from the warm south; they bring into the church, not chill, not death, but life and warmth and joy. These are facts which I do know, which are on record; facts about which the experience of thousands of men of different denominations and varying temperaments agrees.

Revivals of religion are pre-eminently desirable, because they arouse individuals; because they carry up those that were Christians already to a higher pitch of experience; because they renovate the churches themselves; and because they do a work for scattered populations in outlying communities which would never otherwise have been done. There are multitudes of

men that could never get away from the current of their business, that could never face the public sentiment, the social current of the community, unless the community itself became warmed, leavened, aglow with moral influences. Then they would go with the stream; and there are thousands of men who in that way come into the kingdom of God, but who never would have come into it up stream.

For reasons, then, of spiritual thrift in the individual, of strengthening the church of humanity towards the poor, the weak, the outcast, I think we have occasion to bless God for these outpourings of the Spirit, that come as the wind comes, we know not always whence, and that go as the wind goes, we know not always whither; but which, like the wind in the mariner's sail, may be so studied and so used that there shall be over it a substantial control.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. What is your observation as to the tendency of religious revivals to the promotion of religious knowledge and the intellectual character of the community?

MR. BEECHER. — It is precisely what you choose to make it. A revival of religion leaves the minds of the community open as the furrows are. If you choose to sow the seed of knowledge, it will grow and thrive wonderfully. If you neglect that, and throw into the furrows mere executive activity, that will be the crop. Of all things in this world, I believe there is nothing that is more under the law of cause and effect than revivals of religion. And, although they are divine in the most important sense, yet they belong to that side

of Divinity which lies nearest us, and are entirely subject to our control by the appropriate use of instrumentality.

Q. According to your observation, under what we recognize as the revival influence, does n't a man want to know something; does he not hunger after some religious knowledge? Or does the revival influence leave him entirely indifferent as to the truth?

Mr. Beecher. — If it ever leaves men indifferent, it is somewhere where I have never been. I have always found that not only those that were brought in became hungry for increased knowledge, but it was peculiarly so with the old stock. It was like a stirring up of the soil around the roots of a tree; you had growth all around.

Q. Is n't there a tendency to reaction and increased coldness?

Mr. Beecher. — If you draw a line across a man's head, half-way between the top and the base, every one of the faculties below it, when violently excited, tends to reaction. If you take the faculties above, which we call moral or divine, if they have anything like fair usage, there is no reaction to them. If you rouse men up by the basilar faculties and fill them with horror and all sorts of lurid phantasma, look out for a reaction, — you ought to have one. But if revivals of religion come in with hope, with love, with courage, with faith, — in other words, if they are brought in by gospel influences in distinction from legal influences, — they are not subject to reaction. So far from it, I think a man can work twenty years at the very top of all his strength, if he is working by love and courage and hope. Those things never tire out. That is what Christ meant by saying that there shall be rivers of living water in men. They are waters which, if a man have, he does not

thirst; it is bread which, if a man have, he does not hunger. He lives on it more than forty days, — he lives forty years.

Q. According to your statement, the half-educated ought to have revivals; but what shall we do with the educated?

MR. BEECHER. — In the fullest sense of the term "education," no man is educated that is not a Christian. A man is not educated who merely has his *knowing* faculties whetted, sharpened. A man is educated only when all parts of his nature are brought up to high condition. In our time I do not think any man is educated who has not gone through the strata of Christianity, if I might so say. But a great many men that are intellectually wise are just as much and as really the subjects of revival influences as anybody. I have seen men in every way my masters in all intellectual knowledge, who were made like little children. In my parishes in the West, I have seen men who came out from New England, where they had been for more than forty years in churches, — and I think a man that has been in a good old-fashioned New England church for forty years, without being converted, is like a side of sole-leather that has been in a tan-vat for ten years; he is so tough that if there is anything that can affect him it must be divine, — and yet I have seen these men melting down like little children, and made truly and thoroughly amiable Christian men.

Some one asked with reference to revivals in colleges, and whether revivals were to be looked for in connection with college instruction.

MR. BEECHER. — I do not know why they should not be. If you once get away from the idea of their awful-

ness; if you once get clear of the notion that they are directly and solely acts of the Divine sovereignty; if you assume that they are just as much the subject of human volition and arrangement as moral instruction of other kinds, — then I do not know why revivals of religion might not be had in every class in academies and colleges, and that without disarrangement of affairs. A revival of religion is nothing in the world but a religious feeling in its intense and social form, so that it becomes contagious, electric. It is not an abnormal or unnatural condition; it is not one hard to produce.

Q. You know, sir, what revivals have done for your *alma mater*, for Williams, and for Yale, in former years. It is said that, in colleges and universities, revivals are to be looked for less frequently than in the primitive state. Is that so, in your observation, and, if so, how do you account for it?

Mr. Beecher. — I will say, fairly, that I have not given to the subject any particular investigation. I am not aware of the facts. I only know this, that I think there are speculative tendencies unsettling the minds of men that preach, as well as of men that are preached to, in our day. That transitional state through which we are passing has rather broken the power of faith. Men don't exactly know whether they believe in certain things or not. When you have that state of mind in the community, you will not have revivals. A man has got to believe. If he doubts, he is damned. I should rather attribute the decadence or the infrequency of revivals, as a general result, to the transitional state of mind through which, it seems to me, the whole community is going. It seems to me the whole community is moving in the direction of a revolution.

There are a great many people frightened, a great many anxious, and a great many are taking refuge in the old forms, in order to get away from what seems to be coming. And that unsettled state is not favorable for the production of positive results.

Q. Don't you think those lurid influences are relied upon too extensively?

MR. BEECHER. — Yes, sir, they are largely relied upon by revivalists. Most revivalists that I have known are men with immense bellies and immense chests and big under-heads. They are men that carry a great deal of personal magnetism with them, a sensuous magnetism, too, and they have a great power of addressing the under-mind; and they will set feelings undulating like waves, and will carry men on them. I do not believe you could preach with effect to the boatmen and the gamblers of Arkansas and to all the riffraff of the community, those who really live down in the cellar of their heads, unless you brought the motive of fear to bear upon them. If you could in any way bring the higher feeling in their natures to act in and of itself upon the lower ones, there would be regeneration in that direction. But, ordinarily, men that work among those classes are men largely of the earth, blessed with vigorous circulation and great power of throwing out sympathetic influence upon men; and because they preach largely to the under-class, men who are moved by conscience and by nothing else, they preach these acerb and terrific doctrines, and preach them with all the imagery that has come down to us from the mediæval times, with hoofs and horns, and all manner of exaggerated statements. I have heard a revivalist in

my pulpit make statements to my congregation that, if I believed them to be true, would make me abandon the Christian ministry,— I was going to say, abandon decent society and forswear my race! The thing was so hideous! He stood there, — and afterwards, when I was with him, it appeared that he had no compunction, — and he began with this declaration, that the mind was capable of infinite development and increase of capacity. Well, that is pure supposition, to start with. But, assuming that, he went on to say that it would go on increasing forever in power of thought, and power of susceptibility, and power of enjoyment, and power of suffering. That being granted, he went on to say, that if men go to hell they will increase for ever and ever; and when he came to the application, it was this. "I have no doubt," said he, and his great white eye glistened as he rolled it around the audience, "that there are men sitting before me who will by and by be in hell, and will have grown and grown and grown in the power of suffering until they will have reached a point at which they will suffer more in a single minute than all the suffering of all the damned from the beginning of creation to the present hour!" There was his logical inference; and then he multiplied it and went on, saying that there would be multitudes and multitudes of them there, while angels were singing glory to God, and while God was looking over into the pit and seeing that terrific scene, enjoying himself; he wanted me to believe that, and then worship God! Now, where you deal with men in communities in that way, it is you who are to blame; for the reactions are something very terrific in revivals.

Q. Is n't that the style which reaches children, also ?

Mr. Beecher. — It reaches them, — hideously, too. I remember, in my childhood, when a minister came to my father's house, I was like a thermometer. You cannot open the stove door that the thermometer does not feel it instantly ; and so it goes up and down, as sensitive as it can be. My spiritual nature was just as sensitive to religious impulses. I was always plunged into the depth of despair about my sins, always in a state of awful anxiety to be converted and to have the evidence of it in myself. This man, whoever he was, — his name has gone from me, — took my brother Charles and me, and began to tell us stories about the Devil and hell, until I had got into that state that I now wonder I did not go into convulsions. It was hideous. If he had put me on a hot gridiron and left me there ten minutes, I could have got over that, but this soul-broiling, this torturing a little child's sensitive nature in that way, without presenting any thought of mercy or love or goodness or Christ Jesus, — why ! the man was a heathen, only he had a Christian coat on him !

Q. Do you believe in preaching to flee the wrath to come ?

Mr. Beecher. — Certainly I do.

Q. Did you mean to state that, in preaching to those lower classes, you have to use appeals to their lower nature ?

Mr. Beecher. — I state this : that any man who will begin, in any community, preaching to those who are morally dead and uncultured, will generally find that he has to use far more acerb and violent presentations than he will afterwards. And, if he preaches successfully, and preaches there for five years or ten years, he

will find, as his preaching carries people up to higher levels in their own nature, that the same motives will not any longer produce the same effect; that he has got to go higher in his motives, and, preaching on that higher level, he will yet go to a still higher one. He is carried, all the way along, to higher and higher classes of motive. My own preaching in the East is not at all what it was in the West. It is addressed to a totally different class and totally different conditions of society.

Q. Should the pastor allow evangelists to take charge of a revival and assume control?

Mr. Beecher. — That is a very large question. I should never allow any evangelist to take charge of any meetings in my church. But if he is stronger than you are, what are you going to do about it? You go out now and look at the white-oak trees, and you will see that they have held on to their leaves all the winter long, just as many churches hold on to old, dry ministers. And you will see that the moment the sap begins to start in those trees and grow, every one of those old leaves will go. So with many and many a man who has pastoral charge of a church; the moment the church begins to swell, off he will go. It is a very dangerous thing to have a revival of religion, unless a man is wide-awake, useful, and active in his church. And it is a very dangerous thing for a man to build a church edifice unless he is a very able, powerful man. A new church has often unsettled a minister. The impulse that gives vitality, ambition, and movement to the church, — a man must keep ahead of it; if he does not, he will have to go.

Q. Do you think that preaching on doctrinal points is deadening in a religious community?

MR. BEECHER. — Yes, if a man deals too much in it, it is deadening; it is mephitic gas. If you want to speculate, speculate moderately, but don't get into an eddy, a whirlpool, and go round and round, and shut yourself up to that thing. If a man wants to study, let him keep that up, but keep close to *folks*, and feel the reality of human life, the need of men. I am just as subject to scepticism as any man could possibly be, all the time; and I have kept my head above water in a real, living faith in God and humanity, by working on the living, palpitating heart of men. Take a living soul into your bosom, and it will give you life.

Q. Do you think it possible for a man to be converted under the influence of fear, unless that fear goes so far as to secure a knowledge of the love of God?

MR. BEECHER. — I make just the same distinction between a man's being a religious man and a Christian man, as I do between a shrub in leaf and a shrub in blossom. I do not think that more than half the people that come into our churches are anything more than religious; they are converted to religion, but not to Christianity. They are converted to the sense of duty, to the will that means to do right, but they are not converted to that faith that works by love.

To excite fear is to produce life and motion. It is the initial step to arouse a man to that state by which you can carry him forward to higher states. But I do not think that fear, in and of itself, ever wrought love or ever will work love.

IX.

REVIVALS SUBJECT TO LAW.

ALBERT BARNES, in speaking on the subject of revivals of religion, says, "The phenomenon itself we regard as the work of the Holy Ghost, alike beyond human power to produce it and to control it." And then he quotes the passage, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit"; an illustration which was very pertinent before the establishment of the Meteorological Bureau; but, unfortunately for a literal application of it now, we know where the wind comes from and very nearly where it is going to. Still, the figure is just as good, and the truth is more than all figure, and that remains constant. Now, it would be fair to say that this language admits of two constructions. One of these would equally apply to all phenomena of the human mind, — thought, feeling, volition. The other construction would put all the history which is developed under the supposed personal agency of the Divine Spirit of God outside of the pale of scien-

tific observation, of reasoning, of deduction. It is in fact, I suppose, in that place that Mr. Barnes would have put revivals of religion. I suppose he would have said that all nature, meaning thereby the physical universe, is governed by laws, and that by the study of these we may understand and control them; but that God's work in the human soul is secret, mysterious, without law known to men, unstudiable; that it depends upon the sovereignty of God; that God works as he will, meaning by "as he will," that he works without any sense of law or any definite or permanent channel; and that, therefore, spiritual phenomena stand outside of mental philosophy, if by mental philosophy we understand the exposition of the great natural laws which regulate human thought and human feeling. This, I know, was the feeling that prevailed in my childhood. I know that such men as Dr. Heman Humphrey and Professor Edward Hitchcock, for moral completeness and for sturdy and rugged understanding, — the latter for scientific attainment also, in his own day, — were not to be despised. Yet I recollect going down to Dr. Humphrey's under a state of prodigious mental excitement in my own behalf, and asking for some instruction, that I might ease myself of my burden and be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ; and he said to me, "My young friend, you are manifestly under the strivings of God's Spirit, and I dare not touch the ark with profane hand. The Spirit of God, when he strives with a man, is his own best interpreter." And so he left me to the work of the Spirit. Whereas, if I had had but a very little clear instruction, it would have saved me years of anxiety,

and, at times, of positive anguish, for want of knowledge. The impression in Dr. Humphrey's mind was, that the work of the Spirit was of a kind so sacred, so apart from all law and exposition, that it was not safe for a man to undertake to interpret it. I recollect, in a meeting held during the same revival, going myself, — although I was then a member of the church, — to be conversed with by Professor Hitchcock. He came down on the side of the house on which I sat, until he nearly reached my seat; then, turning from me, he walked back to the desk and said, substantially, "I see that this room is filled with the Spirit of God. I am awed and subdued. I dare not attempt to mingle human wisdom with the workings of the Spirit of God." Now, the reverence, the humility, and the childlikeness of the man were admirable; yet I cannot but think the whole judgment and feeling in respect to the work of the Spirit were wrong, and not only inconsistent with the truth, but utterly inconsistent with the administration, in other departments, of both Professor Hitchcock and Dr. Humphrey themselves. They were perpetually laying the foundations of procedure in matters that belonged, according to their own definitions and showing, to the province of spiritual enlightenment. They did prepare with great skill; they did lay out paths where men might walk, expecting certain results to follow. They did, in a latent way, — in a way, perhaps, not so clearly announced as we enunciate it, — they did imply, in their other spheres of labor, that cause and effect ruled in spiritual things, as in intellectual and material things, and that the foundation of knowledge was the study of the methods of the Divine economy, so that

men might co-operate with God. And that study, by implication, requires that we should believe the methods by which God acts to be stated, to be constant. Not but that there is a Divine Spirit working according to its own free will. So, also, do I work according to my free will, and here, on you, turning this way, or that way, or the other; but I always, when freest, act along the line of certain definite mental peculiarities in myself, according to the law of the structure of my mind, and always produce impressions on you, according to the working of the laws in your mind. And yet I am free. I am free to reason, to appeal, to persuade, to pour one or another motive, by sympathy, upon the congregation. Freedom does not imply that one does not move along traveled roads; does not imply caprice, fitfulness, and perpetual unlikeness of method to method. The freedom of the Divine Spirit, the freedom of God's will, does not require that he shall never do twice alike, so that we cannot follow his footsteps, or know *how* he works, as well as *what*.

I remember that in the earlier revivals — the revivals of my childhood — nothing was so impressive as Mr. Nettleton's constant, emphatic, and, I may say, awful recognition of the Divine Spirit. He so represented the Spirit of God as to make everybody quake in his shoes. I think he had the art of inspiring fear, without denunciation, in a very much higher way than usually belongs to preaching of the same general class. But then his representation of the Divine Spirit was, that God was a jealous God, a sensitive Being. And he would whisper this utterance, "*Take care* that you do not *grieve* the Spirit of God!" Why, I felt like a

man walking in the midst of torpedoes, — I did not know where they were ; but I might step on one, and away I should go ! It was a vague terror. I was full of fear ; afraid to go to the right or to the left, forward or backward, up or down. I felt that the whole air was full of a sensitive, jealous spirit that was ready to smite down, I knew not when, or how, or where. I only felt, in a general way, that I was a sinner, and that God was ready to strike me, and that if I could not get under the lightning-rod, where the flash would be carried off, I should be gone. It produced an intense moral nervousness ; but, in a sensitive nature such as mine was, it overacted. An obtuse nature it would hardly bring up to the point ; but in others it would overwork, and produce that kind of *curdling* of the blood out of which comes no good, but much mischief.

THE DIVINE SPIRIT NOT CAPRICIOUS.

Now, in regard, not simply to revivals of religion, which I believe to be the work of the Divine Spirit, but to the whole department of spiritual experiences, I say they are in analogy with mental experiences ; not that they are on the same level, but that the administration of God over the human soul is in analogy with his administration over the lower or physical elements in man, the intermediate emotions of the social and the intellectual processes. Spiritual developments are, all of them, under law, administered by law, as much as any other part of nature, and to be studied, therefore, as we study every other department of human life. And in regard to the moral elements, all the graces of the Spirit and all the fruits of the Spirit be-

long to education. They are to be developed by education, just as much as every other part of the mind. The belief in the immediate presence and efficacy of the Divine Spirit is not inconsistent with the belief that its immediateness and efficacy are exercised through definite laws, with a constancy that makes those laws comprehensible. It is in the possibility of this definite knowledge that the foundation is laid for a wise procedure on the part of the minister and the members of the congregation.

Once, this would have been a very audacious avowal, — I do not know but it is yet. That is to say, it may be considered audacious to preach that men, when they need humility, meekness, rapture, ecstasy, should be put upon seeking these things precisely on the same general methods as when they want the knowledge of criticism, the knowledge of history, or intellectual development in any direction. Suppose, when a father brought his boy to the Sheffield school, in order that he might be trained in engineering, the child should say, "I find it exceedingly difficult to get algebra and geometry into my head"; and his father should reply, "My son, you do not spend enough time in your closet; you ought to pray more: that would open your mind to geometry!" I should not blame a father for saying to his son, "Pray for God's help in studying geometry." But, suppose the father meant to imply that that was the way to learn algebra; that algebra would come as the fruit of prayer; and that if you only humbled yourself and prayed enough, and were in an open and receiving mood, by and by would come in algebra! Yet that is about the way in which many people pray for spiritual

states. They think that if they withhold themselves from known sins, if they put themselves in a waiting position, if they open their minds freely, and then pray for meekness and humility, they will receive those conditions. Some seem to think that such things are kept already prepared, and that when one is in the right state, or has the right temperament, or the right constitution, and has prayed enough, some humility is taken and given to him; that it comes down to him in some way unsearchable and unknowable.

I should be very unwilling to be understood as setting aside, a whit, the faith of the church in the existence of the Divine Spirit, in its universality, in its speciality and personality, — I mean in the sense of acting upon individual persons. I believe it all, heartily. I believe it a good deal more than I should if I were shut up to the old theory. I regard laws as so many limbs in which, in this opaque and material world, and in that other unexplored world within us, I may trace the form of God. I think we never come so near to God as when we are in the immediate recognition of the relations of cause and effect, in regard to the operations of the outward world, or of the inward world. And by believing that all moral results are conformable to the established constitution of things, we do not obliterate faith in the Divine Spirit, but only mark out the ways through which experience and observation teach us the Divine Spirit acts. Its action is universal. It is not, I think, this secret, subtle substance by which men themselves are vital, by which they come above the line and level of physical and material organizations into that state which has never

yet been explored, whose metes and bounds no surveyor can ever measure by chain or rule, whose quality no alembic and no analysis can ever discover, — that yet unknown thing called mind. I believe that when we come into that state in which this begins to effloresce, we enter the region where the Divine Spirit, universal, stimulating as the sun is throughout the hemispheres, exerts its power ; that the soul is waked into life by the Divine Light, and that our higher raptures, rulable according to law, according to definite exposition of law, are yet vitalized and sublimated by the direct impact of the Divine mind. If there is such a thing conceivable as one mind being brooded by another, one mind resting upon another, such I believe to be, at least in figure, the method in which the human mind is awakened and stimulated by the Divine mind. What I plead for is, that the gifts of the Divine Spirit are not exceptional, or capricious, without rule, without definite purpose ; but that they are to be just as definitely expected as the results which the farmer seeks when he sows his seed. Although God is the God of nature, and although all the processes of nature are under Divine sovereignty and power, yet, in that realm there is a definiteness of expectation which is justified by experience. All men think that when you educate a person physically, you are to do so, not without a belief that God helps all things and is everywhere, and everywhere operative, but yet with a definite purpose to make them stand, walk, throw their bodies into postures of grace, and so discipline themselves to strength. We teach the hand all manner of manipulation and skill, and feel that there is no irreverence in saying

we do this by natural law. So we teach children a thousand intermediate disciplines of affection, of love, of taste, of obligingness, of self-denial, — a thousand things that they must or must not do, in order to perfect themselves. In other words, we perfect the lower part of men's natures by education. That we do this with the intellect, every one knows. Reading and writing may "come by nature," but we always supplement them by teaching, and act in the schools as though the intellect had certain laws, as though there were appropriate methods of cultivating it.

REVIVALS UNDER THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT.

But now, when we come to religion, men fly the track. They seem to think, "Here is vagueness; here is a realm too sacred to suppose that law operates in it," and it is just there that I say, in respect emphatically to revivals of religion, that they are conformable to law, and that that conformableness to law is in the foundation of education and knowledge, in the production of emotion, or in the production and conduct of all spiritual processes. You will see, therefore, that the ridicule which men heap upon the efforts made for the promotion of revivals is altogether without just foundation. They say, "Mr. Jackson has gone down to Mill Hollow to get up a revival, I understand"; and everybody laughs, and feels that that man is put down. But suppose I were to say, "Mr. Jackson has gone down to Mill Hollow to hold a temperance-meeting, and to try to get up a public sentiment on that subject." "Very good; they need it down there, and I hope he will succeed." Suppose I were to say, "Down in Mill

Hollow, I understand, there are a hundred children who have not been to school, on an average, one month in three years; and Parson Jackson has gone down to stir the people up on the subject of education, and try to get up a public spirit on the subject." Nobody would laugh at that. But if I say, "Parson Jackson has gone down to Mill Hollow to try to get up a *religious* feeling, a revival," then everybody laughs and scoffs. This could not be but for that background of impression, that a revival of religion is a thing so absolutely above human knowledge, and depends upon such capricious conditions in the Divine Spirit, that human effort in that direction is absolutely ridiculous.

If I should say, "Parson Jackson has gone over to the White Mountains to try to get up a tornado," they would laugh; or, if I should say, "Parson Jackson has taken a lever and gone east to try to pry the sun up in the morning," they would laugh: because these things are known to be outside of human power. But to say that a man is going to stir up the community in behalf of railroads, causes no one to laugh. To get up a reformation in the matter of gambling or drinking, is looked upon as normal and right; but to stir men up in behalf of the whole extent of their moral character and life, — is not that normal also? Is there anything ridiculous in that?

WHAT IS NATURE?

It is such statements, however, that many feel to be an upheaval of the foundations, and a departure from the faith of the fathers. For example, some will ask you, "Does not such a view as this confound

nature and grace? Is it not bringing all gracious operations down to the level of nature?" What is nature, then? Is it a flat plane of matter? — something that lies at the very bottom of God's creation, and is on the whole very unworthily there? Many people talk as if nature were the lowest and the last of things. And therefore they speak about reducing a thing to the level of nature. What is nature? Everything that God ever organized into being and maintained, is nature. The rock, the soil, the herb, the insect, the animal, man, in body and in soul; all the way from the lowest inorganic rock up to the most inspired genius in humanity, all that long line upward, is through the realm of nature. Nature does not wait, either, on this side of death; for when we shall break through, — not by far traveling, but by dropping opacity and the cumbering flesh, — and stand in the spiritual light with spirits that are now perhaps nearer to us than a hand's-breadth, — when we shall come into the other life, still it will be nature, as I believe. For nature is all heaven, and all earth, and all the universe of God. Wherever, along the lines of space, the word of God has thrilled and something has happened, there is nature; and nothing is or can be that does not circle into that. To reduce things to the level of nature, is to reduce them to the level of God, which ought not to be a very great degradation.

PHYSICAL NATURE NOT IGNOBLE.

But there are two things to be thought of, even in respect to that use of the term which men have been accustomed to make. I have not such an ignoble

sense of nature, — meaning by that simply the economy of the physical world round about me, — as to believe that a spiritual intuition or emotion is degraded by being spoken of in the same connection. There are a great many men, acting under the old theological heresy of the intrinsic sinfulness of matter, who curse material nature, as though God had had nothing to do in the making and sustaining of it. I do not consider that unthinking matter is to be ranked or classed with sentient matter, but *this* I think : The heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth shows his handiwork. Oh, there is not a place in the old Litchfield house where I was born that is not dear to my eye! I go back there sometimes ; and the last time I went I chose not to go in the glare of day, they had so changed the place. But I stood at twilight, when just enough darkness had come down to hide the changes, and yet there was light enough to throw up above the horizon and against the sky the substance and form of the old house. It was full, to my thought, of my father and my mother, of my sisters and brothers. My heart blessed the old house for all that it had had in it ; for all the care that it had had, for all its sweet associations. It was stained through with soul color. It was full, as it were, with the blood of life.

The mother who, by reason of increasing wealth, is selling off the old furniture as she moves out of her cottage into her mansion, sells everything cheerfully till she comes to the cradle. " No, my dear, no ; you never shall sell that." What is it ? It is an old, rude, heavy, clumsy thing, which rolls, when you rock it, like a farmer's wagon going over bridges, and makes all sorts of

noises. But there is no money that can buy that. There her seven children have lain; there she has had songs and prayers; there have been tears and heart experiences unutterable, — and they have sanctified the cradle. The globe on which the foot of Christ has trod cannot be ignoble to me. The heavens and the earth are full of God to me. There is not a bird that sings, there is not a flower that blossoms, there is not a lichen that colors the rock, there is not a thing that happens in the world, that I do not say to myself, "That is God's thought and matter." The world is embossed and embroidered and filled full: it records the tastes, the habitudes, the thoughts, the feelings, of my God. Matter by association becomes sacred to me. If you hear men talk about degrading things to nature and to matter, say to them: The right way is to level up, not to level down. Carry the idea of nature and of matter up so high that it will not be a degrading association.

When men say, therefore, that to declare the work of God in revivals of religion is entirely compatible with the system of moral laws, and the results which are the works of the Divine Spirit actually producible by taking advantage of these laws, — when men say that this is to reduce grace to the level of natural law, I think they talk either on a false system, or without knowing what they are saying. For it is no degradation, any more than it is a degradation for me to say that men learn refinement, intellectual culture, taste, beauty, or any other thing, by the application of suitable laws. It is undertaking to find out what God did, and thought, and meant, and to follow that.

Then it is said, "Does it not dishonor God? Does it not take from him his prerogatives? Is it not a vain assumption on the part of man, that he can do what it is the province of the Divine Spirit to do? Can man convert himself? Is not conversion the work of God directly?" Admit that it is — which I do not admit — the sole work of the Divine Spirit; this would not interfere with the ground of moral education, and would not touch the ground on which I place revivals of religion. Although some specific parts of any general system may be more immediately personal and absolutely divine in their causation, it does not affect the fact that the system itself may be a mixture of divine and human volition. But it seems to me that every element that goes to the constitution of a revival, and every element, too, that goes to right teaching, and right training, and the production of all kinds of Christian feeling in a church, — every one of these will one day be solvable; they will come within the circuit of human knowledge; and we shall profit just as much by this knowledge as we have profited by knowledge in the whole economy of society. Do not men live better, are they not wiser and better, for having studied out those phenomena which by the old Hebrews were supposed to be the immediate results of Divine power? God spoke to the Hebrews, when it thundered. We do not any more suppose that thunder is the voice of God. God made grass to grow, as it were, by touching it with his finger. We know that grass grows through the impulse of the Divine Spirit, but it is the Divine Spirit sent through various channels. Are we worse off for the knowledge that the Divine agency is both imme-

diate and remote? So it is said that God, in old times, put it into the hearts of men to do a thousand things with irresistible impulse, using them as machines, starting them as an engineer starts his cylinder, setting it going and pumping right and left. That used to be substantially the idea of the way in which the Spirit acted upon the minds of men.

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION.

Now, more and more is the study of art and science making man powerful, facilitating his efforts, raising the tone of society, stimulating general civilization. So, I believe, one day, piety itself will be carried to a higher level; it will be purified, it will be systematized, it will be better studied, more easily understood, less fitful, less disposed to moods. The Spirit of God is bringing his church into that higher state in which religion also becomes a part of science. That is to say, the way of God in religion will be made known to us just as God is made known to us in physical and intellectual affairs. In that day, I believe we shall have a higher state of piety, for I do not believe that the church of God has more than come to its blossom, if to that. I do not believe that it is going to die under the rocks. I think that it is going to be purged out by the life of science. I believe that many of the systems now held will change the forms and the economies of civilization; but the great substance of religious life is so true, it is so ineffably and transcendently superior to every other, that, in the last unfolding of the Divine Providence, it will be as conspicuously superior to what it now is as every other part of the

human economy is superior to what it was in times gone by.

DEPENDENCE ON GOD NOT GIVEN UP.

But this teaching that all moral and spiritual results are subject to the investigation and control of men, — does it not weaken our sense of dependence upon God? It may, but it ought not to. What is our sense of dependence upon God? I depend on God for the continuation of my reason; but while that is preserved fresh and strong, I feel bound to depend on myself. I do not feel at liberty to depend on God, and then sit up all night; to depend on God for the bright exercise of reason, and then use myself up by twenty hours of continuous study, when I have immediately before me a great effort to make in a public assembly. If I have to preach on Sunday, I pray God to help me. Help me do what? Help me not to be foolish on Saturday; help me not to use myself all up in talking and laughing, not to eat anything improper; help me to be in a perfect state of bodily health; help me to have elasticity of spirit; help me to have such entire control of myself as that my life shall beat in the higher part of my mind, so that all my moral nature shall be luminous, full, impetuous, and wanting to corruscate. So I ask God to help me. Not directly to help me reason, but to help me that I may use reason according to its laws, that I may understand what he gave to me and how to employ it. No man depends on God so much as he who believes that laws are the indexes of the Divine will; and he truly depends on God who, seeing natural laws, obeys them. There is no other explain-

able dependence but that. And certainly the rational explanation of revivals does not decrease that dependence, but rather increases it.

"But does it not inspire in men a vain sense of confidence?" Is a farmer inspired with vain self-confidence, because he can build a wall? Because a man can plow his ground and get forty bushels of wheat to the acre, does that inspire in him vain self-confidence? Is not success in following revealed laws the way to encourage men to normal action and feeling? If I find out how the graces of the Spirit are produced by the constitution of my nature and the constitution of God in my nature, if I find out the truest and the best way by which to develop them, does that inspire, or tend to inspire, me with vain self-confidence? The augmentation of the sense of power in right channels and right directions is wholesome, it is good.

Without, therefore, arguing any further on this subject, which is preliminary, I say that we may approach the topic of the production of revivals of religion with perfect boldness, without any sense of irreverence, and without feeling that we are in any way transgressing either the revealed word or the truth as manifested through God's providence.

WHAT IS A REVIVAL?

What is a revival of religion? Describing it from the outside, it is a deep interest in personal religion, in a church or in a neighborhood. Or, to give a very general definition, it is the existence, in a large number of persons at the same time, of strong moral feeling. It is the excitement of a great many persons together, their

excitement having social relations. It is the excitement of many people together on one subject, and that one subject their moral state, their religious condition. It is the excitement of a great many persons together on the subject of religion, each one with reference to his own personal feeling. It is not with reference to the public well-being, but to each man's own personal well-being. These, I believe, comprehend the phenomena of revivals of religion. They will vary according to circumstances. That is to say, sometimes the impression will come silently, like the dew through the night, and all you know in the morning is that it is there. At other times, it comes with a rush, as a summer storm comes after long drought. At other times, this great, pervasive feeling in the church or the community is the result of deliberate planning or action. In other words, it has all the varieties that belong to nature. It adapts itself to the conditions of men, the nature of the community, and the moods in which that community exists. The phenomena are infinitely various.

THE AWAKENING OF CONSCIENCE.

In the first place, revivals sometimes take on the form, simply, of increased attention. I have heard my father say that his first effort at all revivals was to produce attention, thoughtfulness. But as this is merely the swelling of the seed, the first germ in the development of a true revival feeling is an unusual sensibility of conscience, or of moral sense. More usually, a revival begins with a feeling arising from the application of an ideal rule to life. It is accompanied with

a sense of low living. Men have generally this feeling in a community: "We are not living right; we are not fit to die. Something needs to be done before we are prepared to meet our God." Now, all these impressions are a kind of obscure utterance of conscience. The real thing that is taking place is that the conscience of the community is waking up, and is beginning to apply to thought and feeling new measures, or, if not new measures in conception, yet new measures in practice. Old knowledges become vivid, and there is, throughout the community, an actual personal sense of unworthiness, guilt, sinfulness, whatever term you choose to employ; and that is the first marked symptom. It may be tender, gentle, sweet as a song, or it may be impetuous and harsh, rending as a storm. That will depend upon the conditions in which the community is and has been, the nature of the instruction the people have had, the obliquities through which they have gone, the degradation or the elevation which has previously taken place in them.

THE SENSE OF DANGER.

Then, there is the sense of danger, too. Under some administrations that sense of danger will predominate, and all that goes on in the church and community will go on under the stimulus of fear. But if this renewed excitement of conscience, or this activity of the moral sense, could be made to act under the consciousness of the essential hatefulness of wrong, and thus create a revolt from moral inferiority, a sense of something nobler than fear, — a sense of obligation to God, of the shame and dishonor of receiving everything from the

hand of the benefactor and returning nothing but selfish and quarrelsome ingratitude, — that would be a far more wholesome feeling. But it runs through the entire scale of motive, from this more noble sense of the unbecomingness, the unworthiness, the ingratitude, and the dishonor of sin, clear down to the lowest tone in the base, — the fear of the consequences of sin, a deeper sense of moral responsibility, an increased apprehensiveness of danger.

THE STRUGGLE.

Then comes the struggle. The struggle that takes place in revivals of religion, psychologically stated, is the attempt of the reason and of the moral sentiments to take ascendency of the passions and appetites. It may assume a doctrinal form, or it may assume a practical form. That is to say, sometimes the struggle is of a dissipated man to break away from his dissipation; sometimes, of an ordinary, respectable business man to break away from certain improprieties in the conduct of his business; and sometimes, in highly intellectual, theologically indoctrinated natures, it may be the struggle as to whether a man will submit his will to the supremacy of the will of God. But these are only forms. The real thing that takes place is a nascent effort of the superior faculties in man to dominate the inferior and come to sovereignty in the soul. It involves a clear and emphatic view of God, of the future of our existence. I have ridden many and many a night in storms and darkness, especially in the West, where my early life was largely missionary, when it was so dark I could not see the horse's ears before

me, and sometimes when storms were coming on or were actually raging. I think there are no phenomena, not even burning prairies, or, still more terrible, burning forests in the night, through which I have ridden when the swelling streams threatened to carry me away, — nothing so impressive to me as those sudden flashes of light that revealed to me, as I rode over some elevation, the whole outlying country, so that I could see hill and valley, distant hut, log-cabin, the outlines of the trees, the whole shape of the clouds in the heavens. The whole was instantaneous, and but for a second, and then darkness shut down again. Now, where men are riding, as it were, in the profound darkness of an unconverted and sinful life, and these moral illuminations come and throw the light instantaneously, so that the eternal world is brought near to their consciousness, — immortality, all that is meant in God and heaven, so far as they can comprehend them, all that is meant in life here, all that is right and wrong, — when all this is brought, as in a moment, in a vision, before a man's mind, it is one of the grandest experiences that ever comes to the human soul. You may laugh at men under conviction, but the evolutions that are taking place in the souls of men, when God's Spirit is working upon them in revivals of religion, have in them more grandeur than the evolutions at Waterloo, or in any battle that was ever fought upon earth.

THE VICTORY.

Then there is a transition from this state of struggle to one of victory, purpose, consecration; one in which, by the Spirit of God working co-ordinately with human

reason and with the human will, a man determines his character and his after-life, passes from the lower plane of selfishness and pride into the plane of love to God and love to men, with a purpose permanent, irrefragable, supreme. These, briefly stated, are the points of the phenomena that take place in a revival of religion. Thoughtfulness, leading to an excited moral sense; a new measure of life and duty; a struggle and a victory, in which, when the constituent elements are examined, it will be found that a perfect revolution has taken place in the interior economy. The man that before lived for himself, now lives for God and for his fellow-man. He who lived only for time is now living for eternity as well. These are the things that take place.

HOW TO PRODUCE THESE RESULTS.

Now the question arises, How shall we attempt to produce these? You have said that they are producible, how shall they be produced? I may mention briefly, as the result of my own observation, that there are favoring circumstances in Providence which determine times and seasons in this matter. All seasons are not alike favorable. All methods, we know, are not alike wise, neither are all seasons propitious, for the procuring of these results. For example: it would be unwise to attempt to excite in a community or in a church a very wide-spread, deep, and general moral excitement while the whole community is burning and blazing with political excitement; because you cannot have two such excitements at the same time, and the religious feeling in any community is generally so feeble that it is not

strong enough to resist this greater excitement. There are single instances in which revivals of religion, well inaugurated, have survived political excitements; but in those cases they have been strong before the other excitements began, and they have been shielded and separated. Two rivers of equal force may come together and flow on together, but rills entering a river are lost in it. These major excitements overmaster the minor ones; and the moral excitement in this world is usually the minor one, because of the feebleness of this element in men. You must lie upon your oars and wait for day, watching times and seasons. Then there is a great deal of difference in the time of the year, whether people can get out to meetings or can spare the time. Among hundreds of revivals I have known only one that occurred in the midst of harvest; because men cannot spare the time from the harvest-field. You want time and leisure, and therefore you want those intervals of the year when men's occupations favor. Business has much to do with times and seasons. For instance, sometimes men are hot with speculation, and the whole air is full of it. That is not a favorable time for any processes leading toward this production of common moral feeling. But, on the other hand, the reaction comes. Once in about ten years you may make up your minds that things will go down; and immediately following the universal bankruptcy, or the feeling that men are bankrupt, is a good time to strike in. I do not think that times of general sickness are opportune, — a little remarkable, that. But where wide-spread sicknesses afflict the community, they generally harden the heart. It is almost never a good time for revivals after

the prevalence of sickness, but business overthrows make the best of all preparations. There is nothing that seems to cut the roots of man's dependence on this world like that. There is no other state in which men seem so to want something to hold them up, no other state of mind in which men are so drooping, despondent, and longing, in which they feel so much the vanity of this life, and the need of something better than anything in this life, as they do when the hand of God's providence has crushed their idols, — their money. Those are precious times, — times never to be lost sight of.

Then there may be specially favorable circumstances in communities. And, although general sickness may not be favorable to revivals, sometimes the death of a single person will be blessed to the whole community. In a case within my knowledge, the drowning of two young ladies was the means of producing such universal tenderness and seriousness, that it culminated in a general revival of religion. So a young man, the pride of the village, brought home from college to be buried, of whom his townsmen had hoped the best and the noblest things, and in whose death they were stricken, will produce a state of mind which, if wisely followed up, will lead to the raising up of a score of other young men that will more than fill his place. All these things are to be watched in the community, and your efforts at revivals are to be at particular seasons of the year. As you sow in spring and reap in autumn, as you adapt all the economies of industry to varying seasons, so you are to adapt your moral culture of men to those peculiarities of God's providence, which, with a little care and observation, every one may discern.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Do you say that revivals are sure to follow when means are employed in the appropriate way, at appropriate seasons?

Mr. Beecher. — Just as sure as results are to follow in husbandry. It is not every man that plows well and sows well who gets his harvest; but still, that is the average course of things, and the probability is such as to encourage everybody. It is not every ship that is well built that is lucky, and makes good voyages. There is n't anything that is absolutely certain. I feel, though, in regard to revivals of religion in my own church, that if the circumstances of the community favor, if those means are taken by which men are brought together and kept together long enough to produce a distinct moral impression upon them, and follow it up continuously, the result is just as certain as any other result in the operations of cause and effect in life. I believe, you know, that religion is right living, according to the nature that God has given us; and that when you begin to open up to men their nature and show them what is the great law of rectitude, and then press that right home upon them, ordinarily those who have been raised in Christian families will go right forward. I honor God in the faith that the mind will act according to those laws which God has given to it.

Q. Yesterday, in speaking of different denominations as having seasons of revival, our Episcopal brethren were mentioned as, in some sort, an exception. Where would you place their season of Lent, with reference to its bearing upon revivals?

Mr. Beecher. — I thought afterwards, on returning

home, that revivals, in the usual sense of that term, were believed in by Bishop McIlvaine, and by his successor in Brooklyn, Dr. Cutler. I have known individual instances of that kind, but my impression is that, in general, our brethren in the Episcopal Church prefer to rely, not upon spontaneous and irregular influences, but upon steady and constant action of training institutions. The Lenten services may possibly be considered as an approach towards a revival state.

Rev. Dr. Bacon. — Is n't it an arrangement to have a revival of religion every year, at a certain season ?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, that is the design. It is to have the spring of the year come in with a very strong impression upon the minds of men of the great historical facts of Christianity, with their appropriate results upon the heart.

Q. You speak of some seasons as being more favorable than others to the production of revivals. After all, don't you think that one of the great duties of ministers and of churches is to watch the indications, the leadings of God's providence in the spiritual world, as by analogy we do in the physical world ?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, sir, unquestionably. Only, I have known a great many ministers who spent the most of their lives in waiting for God. I suppose there is scarcely any church in which two consecutive years pass without possibilities of developing more or less the revival spirit. I repeat what I said yesterday, and what I shall have occasion to speak of more fully, that revivals have themselves a progressive history in any church. The first revival, in many of its features, will never be repeated. The next one will be

an advance upon that, unless the interval has been so long that the first has been forgotten. But, take a period of twenty years, and let there be in that twenty years eight revivals of religion, and the revivals themselves will show that there has been a process of development. The last one will be purer, sweeter, more efficacious, less physical, with less of the awful, if I may so say, than the first one. In any two or three years, it seems to me that a man whose heart is warm, whose zeal is strong, will find openings and opportunities for either partial or very general revivals. In almost any large parish, with outlying neighborhoods, a revival may take place in one neighborhood, but not in the whole parish, — sometimes in one portion, and sometimes in another. And these little affairs are to be taken care of, no matter if there are only five or six gathered in; they are precious fruits. Never refuse to glean.

Q. My question would relate to the philosophy of revivals: Where is the real initiative? Is it in the human agent, or is it in the Divine?

Mr. Beecher. — Everything that I have is divine when I am acting in the line of law. I believe myself to be under the inspiration of God at all times, and that that is covered by the injunction, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all for the glory of God." If I sit down to-day to write to those whom I love, the very act of writing is something sweet and pleasant to me. Not that I like to write, for I do not, very much; but, after all, it is the perfume that comes over from the other side that makes it sweet. Now, if one has the sense of God, and lives with God, and feels that God is

his father; if he has the sense of sonship, and carries within himself the thought, "All things are mine, because I am Christ's," — then there is no part of his life that will not refer to God. Under those circumstances, I say, that when I see there is a little opening, and I am moved to go right into it, it is the Divine Spirit that moves me. This body is divine. God took a spark of himself, and put it in me, and called it Beecher. There may be an irreverent way to take that, yet there is another, — the affectionate and the real way.

Q. As I understand it, you look upon a revival of religion as what might be called a phenomenon, and not, perhaps, the regular, normal condition of a church. Would you consider that a church ought to be, or can possibly be, in a continued revival state?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, and no. That is to say, no, if you take your type of a revival from that condition into which churches go when they have not for a long time had one, and which is like the first throwing up of the soil, with the disintegration of rocks, full of violent effects, and therefore full of reactions and rebounds, with much allowance to be made all the way through. In that highly wrought state, a church could not possibly exist all the time. But suppose that to be the first in order, and that the same church, after about two years, has another revival; it will come in less violently, with less retort, with less intense convictions. And your unthinking, unwise, good old men will pray that God would give them another such shaking as they had two years ago. Well, he won't give them another such shaking, because that was a shaking with twenty-five years of deadness before it; this has had but two years of comparatively little falling off to precede it.

It will be much richer, sounder, safer, deeper, more comprehensive, but less phenomenal. Then, after two or three years, will come in another divine work of grace. That will come as tranquilly as the morning breaks out of the night. And some will believe that the work is not deep, because there are so few physical manifestations in it; that is, nobody breaks down, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" with a shout of "Amen!" all over the house. That is what is called a very powerful work of grace. I think the silences of nature are greater than its thunders. I think that what is going on to-day in the meadows, where millions of pumps are drawing up the water through the trees and through the air, is far more tremendous than any enginery which men build and set in noisy motion. So, oftentimes the silences of religion are far the more powerful. And when you adopt that belief in the management of revivals, till men are accustomed to religious things, there is no violent contrast to the foregoing state, and they will have grown and grown until the whole congregation have come up to the higher level of thinking. Revivals of religion in that state are continuous, but not in the lower, convulsive form in which they usually begin in untrained populations, or in churches which are not accustomed to them.

When you ask me, therefore, if revivals of religion can continue all the time, I say that these climacteric revivals cannot. I do not think there is a month in the year in which there are not conversions in my congregation, and I do not think there is a year in which there are not hundreds of converts brought in. We do not look for very great overflowings now. One reason, I

think, is, there are a thousand men and women there who are living very near to the sweetness of the divine life, living sympathetically active lives all the time, forgetting themselves, working for others, cheerfully, hopefully, socially, and gladly; and people, coming in, are at once affected by that spirit, and they begin to blossom, as a bush transplanted from the north to a far southern latitude begins to blossom.

Q. Would it not be consistent with your view to hold that prayer is more essential to the production of effects in a revival, than it is to the production of effects in farming?

Mr. Beecher. — Certainly. That is to say, prayer is more nearly related to the results you want to produce. Guano is better for farming than prayer, but prayer is the guano of spiritual life. Pray always. I hold that prayer is to a man what perfume is to a flower, — it cannot open its mouth without perfume coming out of it. And the praying always, the thought, the feeling, the taste, the sense of pleasure, the social gladness, all the while effervesces, so that it takes the upward tendency. It reports itself continually through the higher feelings towards God, and that I suppose to be prayer, — communion, God with us. I suppose you sought to prevent the impression getting abroad that I regarded a revival as a kind of mechanical matter, like farming, or a stroke of business.

Q. No. But you say the supernatural is exerted in both, and is exerted according to law. I simply wanted to have you bring out this, — which I supposed was implied in your view, — that among the antecedents in the production of this class of effects is prayer; and in a sense different from what it is in the production of effects in husbandry, for instance.

MR. BEECHER. — Ah, I do not know that I should say that.

Q. Well, farming goes on in heathen countries, it may be, if they are equally acquainted with husbandry, as well as in Christian countries, without prayer.

MR. BEECHER. — Well, that shows that without prayer you can farm, but it does not show that you can farm without the divine effluence. It only shows that God does not always measure his influence by prayer.

Q. Can revivals be produced without prayer?

MR. BEECHER. — I have seen many men produce revivals of religion that I did not think were very praying men. I thought their work *limped*, and was very imperfect. Although I do not disesteem — I exceedingly value — the use of prayer, yet it does not seem to me that it bears the same relation to this result which you seem to think it does. It has *a* relation, and a very important one.

Q. It seems to me it is perfectly consistent with your general view of the government of law in the case, to suppose that prayer is one of the appointed antecedents in regard to spiritual blessings.

MR. BEECHER. — It is one of them.

Q. And a very important one?

MR. BEECHER. — Well, I put this case to you: Suppose that I go home and find my little girl, five years old, in whom my heart is bound up, dead: that I am so constituted that I would not stop preaching because of my child's death, but would feel a heroic sense of duty to preach on that very account: that I should go into my pulpit, and it were known to all my people that

my little girl Mary was gone, and I should stand there and preach just as well as I could, the tears running down my cheeks, my utterance choked, and that the word should come back to me on prayer-meeting night, when the lecture-room was crowded, that there was a powerful impression there Would you say that that work had been brought on by the superior instrumentality of prayer? Was n't it that Divine providence, acting on the sympathies, the imagination, the heart and its best feelings? On the other hand, I have known, in churches where it was as dry as Sahara, many a godly man labor through weeks and months without any external encouragement; but, after all, there was gathering there a moral momentum, to break out by and by in tides. Now, I say that prayer is an aid, a powerful antecedent; yet I would not say that it is the indispensable and inevitable one.

Q. Suppose that, when all those young people were got together in the lecture-room, there were no prayer, would there be much of a revival of religion?

Mr. Beecher. — But the revival has begun, and of course you could not help praying under the circumstances.

Q. Suppose it has not begun. Take Habakkuk, for example, where he says, "In the midst of the years make known; in wrath, remember mercy." And then the Psalmist, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that our people may rejoice in thee?" There are two instances of prayer, and Mr. Barnes founded his series of sermons on revivals upon one of these very texts. And on the day of Pentecost men prayed for the outpouring of the Spirit. What do you make of these instances?

Mr. Beecher. — I don't want to make anything of

them. They *are* made. You put the question as if I had propounded the theory that revivals of religion are possible without prayer, and that there was no important relation of prayer. I say, No ; I say that that is one of the channels through which causation seems to flow. It is but one. You brought up Habakkuk's revival, — or one that he prayed for and did n't get.

X.

THE CONDUCT OF REVIVALS.

I CLOSED last week, in discussing the question of revivals of religion, with the consideration of times and seasons, such as might favor, or such as might hinder, the development of a religious enthusiasm in a community. We must bring to mind again, in going forward with this subject, the prime idea, the root of revival; it is the development in a church, or in a community, of a deep religious enthusiasm under social aspects and with reference to some immediate results. That, then, which shall tend to arrest the attention of men, to interest them in religious matters, to produce a normal excitement which may be called enthusiasm, and to turn this enthusiasm to certain immediate and personal ends, — that is the thing to be sought by every one who strives to develop among his people a revival of religion. Revivals are in no sense to be regarded as antagonistic to regular institutional work. They do something which cannot be done by ordinary instrumentalities. They do many things far more easily than they can be done in any other way. There are

men who can be lifted out of the conditions in which they are living when there is a swell in the whole community, that could not be lifted without this collateral social aid. I am not speaking of what is within the power of the Divine Spirit. I am only speaking of what we know to be facts in the ordinary development of Christian work. Without a doubt, by the exercise of Divine power, anything might be done; but, without a doubt, the Divine power does not act in communities, except by methods, channels, laws, instruments; and we are to watch and study these, in order that we may put ourselves in the line of the working of Providence.

EFFECT OF REVIVALS WITHIN THE CHURCH.

The results, then, at which we aim, in revivals of religion, are twofold. First, the immediate conversion of men from selfishness and worldliness to a Christian and godly life; and, secondly, the exaltation of Christian character in the church to a higher plane, to a nobler form of development. Even if there were to be no ingathering from the world, a refreshing — as it is called in old-fashioned language — a refreshing of grace in a church is pre-eminently desirable, pre-eminently a blessing from God, though it may stop with the members of the church. For, as our power is not numerical, but moral, it is not so much the number as the quality of the members in a church that determines its power. A church of twenty men who are eminent in grace and goodness is a larger church, if you measure size by power, than a church of two thousand that are living a very low and worldly life. So that when men

in the church have been living in routine Christianity, without any very active development of personal faith and of the sweetness of the Christian graces, it may often be the case that a revival of religion will do its Divine work within the church, and, though there are not many to be counted as added to the list, the church itself will be immensely strengthened, and its power augmented. The desire of gathering in a large number from without is not indeed unnatural or reprehensible; nor is the work unimportant. But it is still more important that, in gathering in these men, those that gather should themselves be built up, developed, and made more powerful.

BORN AGAIN.

As to the former purpose, we seek in a revival of religion the ingathering of men to a new life. I read in the Word, — I had almost said, with regret, — "Ye must be born again"; because my heart looks at it in such a way that I feel that, instead of being a duty, it is the greatest privilege; it is a wonder of grace almost contravening the order of nature. "Ye *may* be born again," as if it were a permission, would seem to me almost a better rendering. It is true that it is imperative, — "Ye *must* be"; but, after all, "Ye may" is still more sweet, and not less imperative. If a man, after living forty-five or fifty years, had committed such errors and mistakes as to be compelled to retire bankrupt into private life, all his business experience only showing him that he had gone wrong, and could then have the privilege of beginning again, with all his added experience, just as fresh and hopeful as if he had

never made a mistake, what a privilege that would seem to him! But this he cannot do. He has no credit; and, in the ordinary tenure of life, there is no time, after the fiftieth year, for a man to change the impressions of the community about him. The circumstances are all against him, and he must go on, and probably end his life in poverty. See how it is with Christian character. The community is unspeakably more lax than God is, and permits all manner of prevarications, all manner of deceits, all manner of cruelties. While men are moderately respectable, it winks at them and covers them and indulges them, until they go below a certain line, and then there is nothing that has such lion's-teeth as the community. When a man is broken down by sinning and wants to come back again; when he has stolen; when he has betrayed fiduciary trusts; when he has been sent once to the penitentiary for a public crime, and every man stands against him, if not with fierceness, yet with cold distrust, and with unwillingness to help him, — if then a man could come back from the prison and have it said to him, "Now, then, by proper conduct you may stand just as you stood before in the community," what a bounty of blessing it would be to him! But here is the word of God's grace, saying to men that have lived for ten, twenty, thirty years in the way of transgression, "Now you may begin again just like a little child, and take a new start. God is lenient, gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." It is this one thing that we bear in mind, — the possibility of renewing the moral character of men. The great point of doubt has been

whether it is possible to renew moral character suddenly, whether it can be done by afflatus. No, it cannot. That is, character is a thing that grows slowly, but the beginnings of it can be established; the foundations can be relaid of elements which go to establish new habits, and a character can be begun on a new basis. This may be very sudden. A gambler may cease in a moment to gamble, and never touch again the instruments of deceit. A drunkard may, in a single moment, come to a decision by which he shall never again touch the fatal cup. The effects of his past misconduct will not pass away at once; but the man has made a stand that will affect his whole character for time and for eternity. A man may be pursuing a dissolute life, and in a single hour he may set the rudder so that his whole track after that will be upon another line. The beginnings may be sudden. It is the knowledge of the fact that there is a power by which men, not in single instances alone, but in ranks and in multitudes, may be brought in, that inspires us to work in revivals of religion. Men may be changed. We do not get up, therefore, a religious enthusiasm in a social form simply to enjoy ourselves and to exalt the feeling of the church, but because in the heat thus generated you can develop in wicked men a newness of life which it would seem very difficult to develop under any other circumstances. This is the language of experience and observation, and not merely of theory.

WHERE TO BEGIN REVIVAL WORK.

The first question that would naturally come up in treating of how to begin is: In working for a revival

of religion, shall the man who has the conduct of affairs begin with the church, or shall he begin with the community? And this question becomes somewhat more important, because there have been a great many revivalists, as they are called, who have had the gift or power given them by the Master of the church of developing this enthusiasm of religion in a social form in communities. Mr. Avery was accustomed — and, if alive, I suppose he would still follow that course — to refuse to say a single word to sinners until he had dealt with the church. He usually called them together, set their sins in order before their eyes, and demanded of them certain expiatory experiences; and when he had got the church broken in, then he turned to the other sinners, and opened the doors of hope and grace for them. I don't say that this is not proper sometimes; but it was, I think, his uniform practice, on the theory that it is in vain to expect anything to be done with men out of the church, while the stumbling-block of the church lies right in their way. Others have pursued a directly opposite course, and have begun first to deal with the congregation at large. Others — as Dr. Finney, for instance — have attempted to develop a large system of doctrinal views, and to bring the community very generally under a common theological influence, before they began to make any important strokes for results; intellectualizing, indoctrinating the community for a long time. I am not here to criticise that; but this I say, there is no prescriptive way, and there is no one way. You must determine by circumstances. If you were to ask General Moltke what was the proper mode of taking a fort, from the north or the

south, from the east or the west, he would laugh at you. He would say that the way to take a fort is to find where it is weakest, and to attack there. There are circumstances in which your force should be concentrated on the church; there are circumstances in which it should not. In my own ministry, I have considered the church and the people outside of it as all sinners together, and I have worked for the whole crowd. It is true that a united church, brought into a high spiritual state, will have a very powerful moral influence upon the world outside; but it is just as true that a single conversion outside will be a trumpet-call to wake up a whole church. The action from the outside to the inside is just as easy, often, as from the inside to the outside. Carry on both systems. Help the church by society. Help society by the church. Work one against the other. Don't fall into routine, or into set schools of revivalism. It is spiritual engineering, and you are to judge by the circumstances and the facts in the case what is the wisest and best thing to do.

PREPARATION IN THE PREACHER.

As to the means that are to be employed to develop a revival in the church, first and foremost I mention preaching; and, in order to this, much depends on your own state of mind. I think that, almost always, a man has in his own heart the prophecy of these things. I have waked up in spring mornings, and the air has smelt differently from what it did before. I have gone out of doors, not thinking that it was spring, but it was brought home to me by the changed aspect of things around. So I have found, in my own ministry, that

when my heart was right for this work of God, I somehow had it brought to me in a way which inspired courage and zeal and purpose; an intensity of feeling that assured me I was going to succeed,—not I, but the grace of God that was in me. I had a courage, a sort of certitude in me. "The time has come! the time has come!" and I went down into the work with the feeling, "I will not be denied! I will have this blessing! Slay me, but give me this!" And where a man has even the smallest beginnings of this feeling, he is pretty sure to impart it.

Now, how shall a man come at it, if he has n't it? I might say to a pastor, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" You have not had a charge, and so I don't blame you. In what way shall a man who has the cure of souls and is waiting for souls; who believes in God and immortality, in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the dying and necessitous condition of men, — in what way shall he come into active sympathy with them? Suppose a surgeon should say to me, going down to a great military hospital, "I am going down to a great work, and I don't know but my zeal and courage will flag; how would you advise me to prepare to take an interest in this thing and sympathize with these poor wounded soldiers?" If he needed telling, he would not be fit to be a surgeon. The circumstances themselves will be all the incitement he needs. When a man looks over his congregation, and thinks of them, feels for them, prays for them, carries them in his heart, when they are really dear to him, — in part because they are dear to Christ, who is dearer to him than life itself, — it seems to me he needs very little instruction on this matter. Only this:

if you have cares that are freighting and harassing you, lay them aside. If you have worldly business, or anything of that kind, that is absorbing your time and preventing the kindling in you of an enthusiastic devotion to your work, put that aside, no matter what it may cost you. If you find your own spiritual feelings have been scattered, take those means which you recommend to your people, — your Bible, your closet. Humble yourself before God. But I beseech you to avoid that kind of crawling, that prostration, that takes the very manhood out of a man. I don't think God wants to have a man crawl before him like a worm. I don't think he is any more pleased to see that than you would be to see your children act so. I have a little dog at the farm that, when I come home, is so exceedingly glad that he lies down and squirms and rolls over on his back, so that I want to kick him. If I had a child that acted so toward me, I should not esteem him the more. That same dog, although he is so affectionate, will kill chickens, and he never can hide the working of his conscience, — for he has a moral nature in him, — and I know just as soon as I see Frolic, whether he has been killing chickens. If I point my finger downward he is so submissive, and flattens himself like a pancake, and crawls up to me for forgiveness! Now, a dog don't know any better, but a man ought to. And I have seen men who seemed to think that if they *emptied* themselves before God and made themselves mean, and said all manner of self-abasing things, it would fit them for the work. No! Manliness! No doubt every man has enough to confess, but God wants men to come to him as though they were his sons. I

am a son of God, discrowned, dishonored by imperfection, by manifold transgression, but my Father's blood is in me. I am a son of God! I will confess my sin, but I will stand before him as his son still. I am willing to be chastised, but I am not willing to crawl in the dust, as if I were not an immortal creature. It is not necessary to weaken yourself so. But pour out your heart with strong desires before God. Love men! Love God! Work!

Now, as soon as a man comes into that state, if he is going to be successful, his preaching will be intensely earnest, it will be exceedingly clear, it will be personal. So much for the state of mind preparatory to preaching.

SPECIAL KIND OF PREACHING REQUIRED.

At other times you are giving general instruction, but now you converge the knowledge that men are supposed to have. You are bringing it to a definite purpose. When a man is stating law in the lecture-room, he pursues one course; but when he stands before a jury, to win a case, all that he ever knew is concentrated for a definite purpose. He thinks of their verdict. We preach a great many sermons, and properly, which are to promote meditation, which are to bring forth their fruit gradually in the family and in the community at large. That is well enough; but when revivals have set in, our preaching is for immediate results in the hearts and souls and consciences of our fellow-men. So that, while every sermon is an instruction, it is also a plea. Every sermon is to have in it a grasp, an intensity of hold upon men, that shall, from day to day and from week to week, have its influence. You shall feel

in yourself that every time you preach a sermon you have drawn some man, you have gained some man. That is the ideal; that is the aim.

In preaching, in revivals of religion, the great things you wish to secure are the reason, the moral sense, and the imagination of men. Men work more by imagination than we suppose; not in the form in which it is associated with poetry, but with that action of it which brings invisible things to sight, which enlarges the scope of existence, — in short, which brings the eternal future very near to men. Sermons must bring out those truths of God's word that are sure to have effect. They must bring out those truths which satisfy the judgment, the common-sense of men; which also frequently arraign and satisfy the conscience; and which do these things in the light of the higher relations which men sustain to the future and to the government of God. I say this, because many people suppose that, in revivals of religion, the only thing to do is to address the feelings, to sing men along, to exhort them along, to carry them along they scarcely know how. There is a place for singing and for the social exercises in the subordinate meetings; but a minister ought never to preach so well, so strongly, so clearly, and so compactly, never with such appeal to a man's deepest nature and through his imagination to his whole being, as in the initial state of revivals of religion.

FREQUENCY OF SERVICES.

As to the amount of preaching that is to be done, or the number of meetings that are to be held, I would say that depends on circumstances. In good old New

England times, to a reflective people, accustomed to argue, cautious, conservative, you might preach powerfully on Sunday, have one extra meeting during the week, and perhaps one or two more prayer-meetings in neighborhoods. That would serve to bring people forward. They would get along on that. But take later communities that are full of vital influence, nimble, enterprising, active, with fugitive plans and thoughts, changing every day, rushing, — why, that would produce scarcely any impression upon them; and the proper treatment is by frequent meetings and continuous meetings, by iteration that shall overcome all the distractions outside of them. The aim is to bring men into a state in which they are susceptible of moral development, of the higher forms of Christian feeling; and, therefore, how frequently you are to preach depends very much upon the parish you are in. Sometimes once or twice a week, sometimes every day in the week, with prayer-meetings besides. I think, in a time of revival, a minister can generally preach once a day and once or twice on Sunday much easier than, at other times, he can preach once or twice in the week. Nothing so strengthens a man, or makes him so fertile, or enables him to carry work so well, as to be in a revival of religion. There is some difference among men. Some have so slender a constitution, their vital force is so insufficient, that they cannot bear the strain on nature. Yet, on the average, men can carry more work than they think they can, if they don't squander themselves. I don't hold up my own case as an example. I have an uncommonly strong constitution, and have great resiliency and recuperativeness; but I have preached every day

for long periods, and twice on Sunday besides, holding an inquiry-meeting and a prayer-meeting and doing a great deal of visiting intermediately, and that too, as far as I could see, without any weariness or reaction afterward. It was not merely because I was strong. It was because I worked on the saccharine juices, and not on the acid.

COURAGE GIVES STRENGTH.

If you work on the principle of "awful responsibility," if you have all the time the feeling of anxiety and care, if you go about bowed down with worry, you will be exhausted very quickly. You cannot bear much. But go about from day to day, in the midst of the outpourings of God's spirit, with this feeling: "The Lord Jesus Christ is my elder brother. He thinks of me and of my people a thousand times more than I do. This is his work. He will surely accomplish it, and he says to me, 'Trust in me, love me, hope, and be courageous.'" If I go on the principle of love and trust, I can do ten times the work that I could do on the principle of anxiety and conscious responsibility. There is nothing that wears a man out so soon as worry, and there is no worry like that which comes from the attrition of anxiety in ministerial life. Ministers are so afraid they shall not do things just right; so afraid they have not dealt with this man just as they should do; so afraid that sermon was not quite right. Of course it was not. You may as well take that for granted in the beginning. You will never do anything just right, never say anything just right. God knew it when he made us, and he made us notwithstand-

ing; he knows it, and employs us with that understanding.

No man is perfect here. All our best work is full of chaff. If we could see the truth as God sees it, and then as we preach it, the last would seem to us despicable. The old figure of our righteousness being filthy rags is true, in this higher interpretation of moral feeling. Therefore, let it be true at once and for all. Dismiss it forever; and do not, all the time, act as if you thought you could be perfect, and it was only from want of vigilance or anxiety that you had not been perfect. Let a man simply have this testimony in himself: "I am ready to do anything; I am willing to put all the strength I have into my work. Here I am, what there is of me; I throw it all into the work." Thus let him have some use for his God; trust him; believe in him. What is the use of having redemption through Jesus Christ, reconciliation and love, and all promise and hope, and then going bowed down as if you were a galley slave? Be yourself, before your congregation, what you want them to be; and, while you preach the love of Christ for human souls, show them that *you* have it, by your confidence and cheer. For there is no time when a man ought to sing and whistle and laugh and feel so happy as in the coming of a revival of religion. In Litchfield, when I saw a thunder-storm coming up, I used to run into the house and ask my mother to let me put on my old clothes and go out in the rain; for nothing was so grand to me as being out in the tempest, and seeing the elms swayed and the long drought broken by the coming on of the storm. I exulted; and though the birds were

all gone, I was there to sing. When, after a drought in the congregation, things are beginning to move again, that is the time for exultation. You need not be afraid you will grieve God's spirit away. If God's spirit could be grieved away, it would have been done long ago, when you were preaching old tinkered-up sermons, repeating for the five-hundredth time the message you did n't care for, first or last. But when men begin to be alive, when there begin to be some real affinities with God and Christ, then is not the time to be anxious and low-browed. It is the time for gladness. In this spirit, a man can preach every day. He can't help himself. The days will not be long enough, not enough of them in the week, for him to preach, provided he has this impetus, this "rejoicing in God." You know Paul said, — he had a double-barreled gun to fire, — "Rejoice in the Lord!" and when he fired off the other barrel, he said, "Again I say, Rejoice!" This buoyancy, this cheerfulness, this hopefulness, this holy confidence, this radiant gladness in the minister, will have a direct bearing on the production of the effects he seeks by preaching. Under ordinary circumstances, make that your main reliance. Preach the gospel, — the power, the nature, the love, the justice of God, the condition of men, their sinfulness, their profound danger; open the future to them; let them see into what they are going; analyze their character; measure them by their own standards, and show them how low their condition is; lift the standard higher, and show them how much lower they are, until you come up to the ideal and measure them through and through. Deal with them with all the earnestness and vigor that God has given you.

DO NOT WORK BY AUTHORITY.

Then, while you are preaching in this way, remember that while you are master, while you dominate them, while you have authority over them, while you are zealous for the truth and glory of God, on the other hand, — strange and anomalous condition, — you have got to lie down before them, you have got to let them walk over you, and be their servant. When you go fishing, you have no authority to lay upon the brooks. You have got to find out how fish are to be caught, and you have to catch them in that way. If you are fishing for trout, you go to work one way, for perch another, and for bullheads another, and you bob for eels. You may throw the net for some, and some you never can catch in a net. Some you never can catch with a set line; and, if you want to get them, you must begin afar off. I have seen a man, when he came into the meadow where the trout-brook ran, lie down some four or five rods before he got to the brook; for, said he, "The very jar of the ground, light as I step, will be felt by them"; and he crawled up to the edge of the brook, and then, lifting himself up, he threw his line; and when he had got his trout, he did not care if he had crawled an acre over. Now, a man that fishes for men has got to fish for them in all sorts of ways. You cannot put your royal robes on and walk down the street and have men come out and cry, "Convert me! convert me!" You have got to treat proud men in the way that proud men have to be treated. Some men come to you that you did n't expect. Some will hold back, from whom you expected the greatest help. You

will have all sorts of surprises, and your business is constant and various. Suit yourselves to emergencies; your business is to win men. Win them one by one, one by one. I don't think there is any joy so great in this world as the joy of working in a revival, when a man is in good health, and when there is a genuine work of grace going on, and those whom he respects and loves are breaking out, one by one, into new life and uttering their joy. I don't think there is anything this side of heaven that is comparable to that; and I have said, in these moments, that all the kingdoms of the earth would be nothing to me compared with the royalty I carried in my heart, when I saw men bowing down in this way and coming to God. It is reward enough. A man never seems to himself to have so little personality, never seems to care so little about himself, to have so much thought of God, such insight into theology, such perception of moral truths, as when he stands in the presence of men roused by the spirit of God, and is obliged to meet their case, and to administer to their wants. It is astonishing what revelation, refreshment, reinvigoration, indoctrination, inspiration, is given to men who are engaged in the same work in which God is engaged, — bringing sons and daughters home to glory.

VARIETY OF METHODS.

I am speaking of the variety of instrumentalities that can be employed. I have given an emphasis to preaching, though not more, I think, than it deserves. There is a variety of other instrumentalities that bear more or less directly upon the social side; and I may

mention, first, the multiplication of meetings and prayer-meetings. It is sometimes well that a meeting should be thrown entirely out of its shackles of custom. So prone are we to run in ruts that, once in a while, it does us good to break up accustomed forms and methods, and make the meetings stand out as something singular and peculiar. Thus, before my time, in early days in Brooklyn, meetings were held in the lecture-room of the church that stood on the ground where Plymouth Church is now, at five o'clock in the morning, and they were thronged. Well, it would not have been wise, the next year, to put the meetings at such an hour. But, for that one time, the very singularity of it kindled men, and, during the whole of that season, the room was not large enough to hold the people. Something out of the ordinary way serves to arouse the attention of the community and draw their interest.

PROTRACTED MEETINGS.

Protracted meetings are eminently useful in the conduct of revivals of religion. We all know that protracted meetings are necessary for the development of the social in other things. Political campaigns are one continuous series of protracted meetings. If you wish to get up an enthusiasm in anything, it must be by constant repetition, iteration. Suppose a man should undertake to make a sword, and should come to-day and give it one blow and go home, and to-morrow should come back and give it another blow and go home, and so on; how long would it take a man, at that rate, to be an artificer? No; he must repeat his blows, one after the other, while the iron is hot. It is

not enough that a man should go to meeting once on Sunday, in order to do certain things.

Thousands of men are not able to carry the Sunday far down into the week. They need to have their impressions renewed. They are fitful, feeble; they don't generate thought easily for themselves. There are thousands of persons not able to generate much feeling for themselves; but if you bring them into a mass-meeting when there is a great deal of feeling about, they catch it by sympathy; it helps their weakness: and this is the theory of protracted meetings, that while the strong may not need them, they are of benefit to the weak. Their poverty of thought and of feeling, their want of continuity of will, are met in that way; and protracted meetings are thus great blessings.

How long ought they to be protracted? Just as long as you want them. Four-day meetings? Yes, four days, or eight days, or twelve days, or sixteen days, or twenty-four days, or forty-eight days. You own all the time there is, and you can keep them up as long as they are profitable. Suppose my boy should come to me and ask, "Father, how long ought I to shake the chestnut-tree?" "As long as the chestnuts fall; as long as there is a chestnut left," I say to him; "shake till you can get no more nuts. As long as they fall, club it." I remember, in one case, carrying on a protracted meeting in my own parish for over eight, nine, ten weeks; and when, on Sunday morning, I made up my mind to close the series of meetings, I had looked over the congregation and could count but ten that were not hopeful Christians, and they were persons for whom I did n't believe it

would be of any use to keep the meetings going; so they were closed. But there is no rule about it. So long as protracted meetings are useful and good, employ them and keep them up. As soon as they cease to be beneficial, quit them; use liberty and good sense.

There are also many things in vogue which are good in some communities and not in others, and are, in fact, matters of taste and discretion. In some communities, it is the custom to invite persons to rise for prayer in meetings. I have seen the very best results from that, yet I never could do it in my own congregation. I have tried it a few times, but always in a faltering way. It did not come naturally to me, and it did not harmonize with my style of administration from year to year. Yet I have seen men who, in times of revival, had the happiest results ensue from employing that method of bringing people to a decision. The theory is, that there are hundreds and thousands of persons floating about a community who have a certain amount of moral sensibility, but it does not take on any form of will. If, however, you can in any way concentrate that, and get these persons to commit themselves by an avowal, then their pride and vanity, and all their other feelings, will tend to press them forward in the right way; and so, by public commitment, they are put in a better position. There is no harm in it, when it works favorably, and there is no obligation attaching to its use.

The same is true of "anxious seats." A great deal has been said against them. It is a very common practice in Methodist churches, and with them it works

extremely well. There is no reasonable objection to them. But if there is anything in yourself, anything in the character of your people, that should make this inexpedient, you are not bound to try it.

INQUIRY-MEETINGS.

Inquiry-meetings are of universal use, but more in New England than anywhere else. They bring the mind of the minister to bear directly on a single individual mind. They are more thorough; they explore a man, they find out his habits, they learn his disposition, they apportion the truth exactly to his want. Preaching to a whole congregation is very much like giving, in time of pestilence, hygienic instructions which every man must apply for himself; but an inquiry-meeting is like the visit of the physician. He takes each man by the pulse, and determines the medicine especially needed. I have always, in my own charge, dealt very largely in inquiry-meetings, frequently calling them after every prayer-meeting; not disconnecting them, not making them formal, but saying, "If any persons wish to converse with me after meeting, I will remain." And after the Friday-night meeting, I do the same, making it as little awful as possible; making it social and genial and inviting; winning people to it.

CAMP-MEETINGS.

Camp-meetings are scarcely within your probable range. I believe in them. I think they are excellent in new countries, and under certain circumstances they may be employed in old communities. Still, they are

not ordinarily within the habits of our sort of people. I have spent some very blessed days in camp-meetings; and no man with poetic feeling, an eye for the sublime, who has seen a genuine camp-meeting, can ever revile it. The night, beautiful in its radiance overhead, the trees lit up with lamps, the songs of Zion sung by three thousand people, the strange mingling of light and dark; and after the great meeting is over, and the people have retired to their several tents, and had family prayers, I have lain in my little bunk and heard, in the night, six, eight, or ten little meetings going on all around me. One dies out, another dies out, and another; there are only three; another follows, and there are only two left; and finally, as the last bell strikes, I hear but one. After that, low murmurings, and then silence comes down over the great camp, and all is still. I think the life is almost a fairy life. It is enchanting. And yet, while it is eminently proper for a sparse population in a new country, and may be used occasionally in old communities, it can scarcely come within the range of your probable settlements.

EVANGELISTS.

Only a word now on the subject of evangelists. In general, in the induction of a revival of religion, it is better that the pastor should do his own work. It is a great deal better for you to be the father and the brother of your people, and, taking the spirits that are in sympathy with your own, to do your own visiting, get up your own meetings, conduct them, and have the domestic element, as it were, in your own parish. If you need further force than this, the next best thing

is to call in your brother pastors. There should be a fellowship in churches in this way, and you should have help from those that are congenial. But there is no reason why, under certain circumstances, you should not have the help of men who have shown themselves to be gifted by the Master with a special talent for developing religious feeling in the community. But, in the admission of evangelists, or revivalists, all may not alike be useful to you. There are many men whom I trust, and whose names will stand far above mine in heaven, that I would not have in my congregation under any circumstances. There is a genius that belongs to every church development which has its own individuality and peculiarity. "But if you introduce a revivalist whose whole style of thought is different from your own, and in antagonism with it, you will introduce a discordant element." Even so; but then I would object to none because they are evangelists.

In the selection of help of this kind, I should say one needs to be very judicious in calling in to his help those that are professional evangelists or revivalists. I incessantly develop in my people hope, courage, faith. I work by that myself. I have taught them to work by it. My congregation is genial and cheerful, and there is an atmosphere there of fellowship and of kindliness. Now you bring in a man that preaches harshly, and begins to bear down upon the conscience with that stern sense of awful responsibility, — there would be rebellion in the congregation; you could not hold them to it. And therefore, although that man might, in another relation, be an excellent man, do much good, and be owned and blessed by the Master, yet he is not adapted to that

place. There are a thousand wheels that are just as good wheels as any in a certain watch, but the difference of the ten thousandth part of an inch would make any wheel inappropriate for that particular watch. The wheels must have a certain relation to each other, or they won't keep time. And so of the genus Evangelist. There are a good many species; and while it is best to do your own work, or to do it with the help of a brother pastor, still, if you are obliged to, call in an evangelist, but do not do it at hap-hazard; call one who will work on the same lines and in harmony with you. That will be likely to help you; and he will probably leave your church stronger than he found it, and you better rooted in the church than when he came.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Q. Does not such an evangelist as you have described meet the wants of some people?

Mr. Beecher.—Yes, sir. But then, suppose he meets the wants of a few at the expense of a great majority? You cannot make a net, you know, that will catch trout, and at the same time be fit to catch sharks; it has to be so very thin. I do not think that any one administration can take every sort of person. I think it is to the interest of every Episcopal church in the community that there shall be a Congregational church alongside of it; and it is to the interest of every Congregational church that there shall be, in the immediate vicinity, a Presbyterian or a Methodist church: that thus elements may be developed outside which will

affect them beneficially. My dear old father used to think that it was his interest to keep out all churches except his own from Litchfield. The moment he found a Methodist was getting up a fire, he would go and put his foot on it. And I heard him say, in the exuberance of his zeal about it, "Why! when I heard the Methodists were getting in, in such a district, I would go over there and I would preach so much better than they could, that they could n't carry their meetings along!" Well, that was about the spirit of that time. If I had my choice, I would never have, in any community, less than one good representative of each of the various forms in which churches develop themselves; no church can develop all sides. And so we get from the formular worship of the hierarchical churches some elements in the direction of veneration and taste, that we do not and cannot very well develop in our congregational churches. On the other hand, there are certain enthusiastic social elements that are developed by the Methodists: there is a royal — jollity, shall I say? — a heartiness among them, that it is very hard to get in a Presbyterian church. But there is an intellectualization, and a certain element of righteousness and ethicalness, in Congregational and Presbyterian churches that is pre-eminently fundamental in a community. And if this view of the church as the body of Christ, and all the individual churches parts thereof with various powers and functions, — just as a single church is represented as one man, with members carrying different gifts, — if this view might prevail, sectarianism would be disarmed of its sting.

Q. Don't you think it is necessary to bring men to a decision in regard to the subject of religion?

Mr. Beecher. — Certainly it is. But decisions, you know, are very different things with different people. Decisions take place in connection with different faculties. A person with very large conscientiousness and self-esteem would come to a decision that would meet together with a snap you could hear all over town! But, take a person who lacks in those elements, and who is genial and gentle, and he will decide as clouds do, — that change their form in a rosy, round-edged, soft, flushy way. You must remember that decision takes on a great many different forms; but, somehow or other, everybody must be brought to the point of decision. There are some men who decide as an engine flies the track, and there are others who go off on switches, but keep to the track. There is every possible variation.

Q. Don't you think that a revival has a tendency to bring men to a quick and rapid decision?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, sir.

Q. What is the philosophy, or reason, or cause, of that?

Mr. Beecher. — The reason is very plain, — that you are causing everything to converge to that very end. That is the thing you are exerting your whole influence for. You have indoctrinated them; they have learned their duty; they have learned moral government; they have learned a thousand truths. Now you

take all the elements that they have been gaining through your pastorate, and by your instructive preaching, and concentrate these upon them. This reminds me of the first sermon I ever preached that I felt did any good at the time. I was in despair, at Lawrenceburg. I could preach to interested hearers. I hoped that I instructed them in some measure, but I never could carry the congregation beyond a certain degree of excitement. In the West, they always had two or three days of preaching before a communion season. By the preaching, in the preparatory days, the interest would grow and deepen, and the people would become intense, and come on the Sabbath day to partake of the communion of the Lord's Supper; but by Monday, it had all gone out again, and there was nothing left. I would think the church was getting on its legs to march, and it would fall flat again. I sent out for Dr. ——, and asked him if he would not come down and help me, but he could not. I sent up for father, and asked him if he would n't come down, and he said, "No, you must find out, yourself." I went over there to Indianapolis, and my heart burned within me. I could not be preaching for nothing. I determined to sit down and study how the Apostles did it; for, though I was not an apostle, I thought possibly I could do something, in some way, according to my size and shape. I took the book of Acts, and studied Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. I analyzed it, I looked at it all the way through, I formed a theory of the way in which the effect was produced, and I then constructed a sermon, — not of the same material, because Peter was preaching to a Jewish audience and I

was preaching to Hoosiers, — but I constructed a sermon on the same principle, as I understood it. I was preaching in the hall of a little academy that would hold a hundred or a hundred and fifty people. The legislature was in session, and a good many lawyers and public men were there. I went down, on Sunday morning, as anxious as a boy with a new gun would be to try and see how it would shoot. I fired my sermon, and there were about ten men awakened. If there was ever anybody delighted, I was. I had learned how to preach. I said to myself, "I have got the knack of aiming now; I know what to do." Well, the trouble was, that, though I had preached that sermon of that sort, I had materials to preach but one or two more, and then I ran out. But I had got the ideal, after all, — the sense of aiming at certain points, and carrying them by the direct application of the truth. That was everything to me. My horizon enlarged and enlarged, so that by and by I came into the possession of my profession, so far as I have ever attained it.

Q. You have said a good deal to make us feel very kindly towards all denominations, and to make us feel that it is very consistent to have a good many of them; but how do you get along with the fact that in so many of our towns, East and West, especially West, every denomination considers it its duty to be represented, as much as if there were not any other denomination there, and so they all become weak?

Mr. Beecher. — Yes, that is a misfortune that ought to be striven against as far as possible. I know we had sixteen denominational churches in a population of four thousand, in Indianapolis.

Q. Did you consider that too much of a good thing?

Mr. Beecher. — I did consider it a great deal too much, but it did not argue that a little was not good. I think that, in making a sandwich, a little mustard improves it; but I would not put in a quart.

XI.

BRINGING MEN TO CHRIST.

I PURPOSE, this afternoon, to confine my remarks principally to the consideration of what may be called the clinical practice in revivals, or the treatment of cases as they arise. As nearly as I can judge, there has gradually come to be, in our time, a very great difference in the way in which persons in whom religious sensibility has been developed are treated, as compared with the custom that prevailed twenty-five, and still more fifty years ago. I have no doubt that if the venerable and noble ministers who lived in those times were to stand by now, retaining their views, and look upon the development of Christian character as it takes place in intelligent churches and under intelligent ministrations, they would think the world was coming to an end; and that men were being converted entirely out of the proper way; and that the church was likely to be filled up with material feeble in spiritual life.

And yet, on the other hand, I think none can deny the fact, that never before at any period were the churches possessed of so many members of so high a

type of piety; and never was piety based upon better, clearer knowledge; and never did Christian emotion so co-operate with Christian activity as in our time.

While, then, it would seem that the technical processes with which men are treated have suffered great change, the result of those processes in the hands of the Christian ministry in our day is the production of a higher type of Christian character, not in individuals, but in communities.

I purpose to consider the phenomena of conviction of sin and of conversion, of the obtaining, in the old language, of a "hope"; and of the various experiences that stand connected with these things.

THE OLD AND THE NEW PRACTICE.

I admit freely that there is no such attempt now made, that there are no such lessons in working with respect to the promotion of conviction, its depth and its continuity, as prevailed in earlier days. In working, it will be found that you cannot control things, that they will have their own way; that one class of your hearers will develop moral sensibility in one degree, another class in another degree; and they will assume aspects so different that the contrast between the extreme cases at the two ends of the scale will make it seem as if only one could be right and the other must necessarily be wrong. There has always been an effort to countervail this. That is, there has been a theory that, in conviction and conversion and the entering upon the Christian life, there are certain great marks common to all; and therefore there has been an attempt made to bring men up to certain

tests, and to compress, as it were, experiences into certain molds; to prevent elasticity and liberty of being, if one may so say. Or, as I have been accustomed to say, the old-school men refuse to allow God his own sovereignty in the way of convicting and converting men, but insist that the sovereignty should be exercised according to certain prescribed patterns, deduced from experience. It will not be difficult for men of a certain moral organization, that is, men organized so as to be susceptible in religious directions, who have been under continuous religious culture, who are apprehensive of the truth, candid, fair, — it ought not to be difficult to produce in such men, and that, too, by very slight and gentle means, all the conviction of sin that is necessary, all that is of any use. On the other hand, persons of a torpid disposition, slow of thought, not easy to move in their emotions and inward life, will require a pressure far greater. So it falls out in preaching, continually, that sermons which are adapted to rouse the lethargic and torpid overact upon those that are sensitive and mercurial; and that allowances and explanations and concessions which are strictly right, as adapted to more sensitive and advanced natures, are taken advantage of by those lower down; so that, in dealing with men, there is no one single way. There is to be incessant adaptation to the individuals, or, in large communities, to the classes, into which individuals fall.

The character of conviction of sin will very largely depend upon the theology which you preach. If you preach the theology of Dr. Emmons, you may expect several results. The first is that you will lose most of

your congregation; secondly, those who remain will be very hard and stubborn; and, thirdly, when conviction does come, it will come like the rushing of a mighty wind, like a tornado, like an earthquake, breaking up the foundations of things. The results will be in some such proportion all the way through.

If you preach the higher forms of Calvinism, if you represent God as he is represented in what is called hyper-Calvinism, a congregation will stand it and hear you through; and if you bring men into such a state that they feel guilty for not loving such a God, though it may take a good deal of time, yet when the result does come on, it will be something terrible, and will very nearly break up the foundations of moral consciousness, very nearly take away a man's reason. If, however, a milder type — ordinarily considered the New England type of Calvinism — be presented, so that God is represented as supremely just, not upon impossible conditions, or conditions so extraordinary as scarcely to come within the range of human comprehension or feeling; if you represent the administration of the universe as in the hands of God, who maintains for the welfare of all a system of righteous law, who deals with men in such a way as to address himself to their reason and moral consciousness, — it ought not to be either a long process, or an exaggerating process. That is, feeling ought not to be driven to such wild extremes in the process of satisfying men that they are guilty for disobedience to such a God and to such laws.

In general, the more the element of coercive gentleness — if I may say so — the element of paternity, the

element of Divine love, is preached, the milder will be the type of conviction, but the more efficacious, the more rapid in its workings, and the more rich and beneficent in its results. Let me guard you, however, against supposing that the infusion of a larger element of love in the Divine character, with a less element of justice, will work beneficially. I would not be understood to teach that the Divine love is that vague and colorless good-nature and kindness which some suppose. In my thought, love carries in itself the highest truth and the highest justice, and the most absolute requisitions of right and duty; and it carries both justice and truth in the spirit of love. The atmosphere differs; the elements remain the same.

DIVERSE PERSONAL ELEMENTS.

The variety of cases which occur under pungent and faithful personal, applicatory preaching, is very great. I cannot attempt to mention all, but will take some of the more common and conspicuous. There will hardly be two persons awakened alike. You must not expect it. Take, for example, the awakening of children. How impossible it is for a child to be affected with any such sensibility, or any such introspect or retrospect, or any such burden of conscience, as belong to an adult, who has gone through life organizing selfishness, cultivating passions! The child knows none of these things. You can say to a child, "You are a great sinner before God," and it trembles; here is some vague mystery, it does not know what. You can work upon its sensibility, and teach it that it must give up its heart to Christ; and it may in a helpless way lift its little

hands and try to deliver itself up to the Lord Jesus Christ, and by and by be told that it now may be happy, having passed through all the stages. Who that looks into the heart and reads things as they are does not see what a work has been wrought upon that sensitive nature? But the child that has had no life, whose experience is nearly nothing, how can you expect a manly disposition to be developed in that? It is said that jugglers in India will take an acorn and extemporize a tree before your eyes. That may be done by jugglery, with a seed; but in childhood you cannot develop a virile experience.

Among the mature, conviction will generally vary with the disposition. In one class reason will be predominant, because that is the structure of their mind. Another class will not reason much, but they will be chiefly influenced by emotion, because that is the structure of their nature. Some persons will have a light playing about their conceptions of right and wrong, which shows that they have the element of imagination largely developed, and they get the view which imagination alone enables the reason to give of moral qualities, of right and wrong, of the present and of the future.

DEGREES OF INTENSITY.

All these elements you will find developed under any searching ministry. Their intensity will depend upon the constitution of a man's mind and upon the history of his life. I should suppose, for instance, that a man with a slow and torpid moral sense never could arrive at any vivid convictions. The Divine Spirit

that shines alike upon all the earth does not make all things upon the earth alike beautiful; nor does it change the inertness and sleep in all plants at the same time; nor does it produce a like development in all. So the Divine influence, working through the truth that falls upon the human heart, acts according to the laws of that human heart, and men that are slow of belief, slow of intelligence, torpid of feeling, will come up but a little way comparatively. If you wait for them to develop paroxysmal feeling, if you have an impression that no man can come into the kingdom of God unless he comes in with a sweep and a whirlwind of experience, you will find yourself overmatched perpetually, and you will do one of two things; you will either throw them back in despair upon the world, or else lead them to simulate an experience, so that they will unintentionally, but really, come in upon a false basis. Understand that every man will have an experience corresponding to his organization and his nature. In some there will be very little feeling, slowly educed; in others, very much; and, as respects that, one may be just as good as the other.

The wickedness — that is, the overt wickedness — of a man's life will also have much to do with his sense of conviction. I mean that conscience is largely formed by the public institutions of society, by what prevails in the domestic circle, by what are understood to be the civic virtues; and a man whose conscience is not merely instructed from the pulpit, but has also been formed in civil affairs and social relations, will have an experience the proportions and character of which will be taken somewhat from this education. So, if a man

has been a drunkard, a licentious man, a thief, a pirate, or a liar, and has come home and been brought under the power of religious teaching, and has something of manly nature yet left in him, — when the truth falls on that man, you might well suppose that he would have a concrete conviction of sin ; a conviction that he is a desperate sinner. But his idea of a desperate sinner would not be that he had broken the law of God, but that he was a liar, that he was a robber, or a pirate, or a lewd man, or a drunkard. It would fasten itself upon some of those physical, external forms of sin ; and while you might attempt, by and by, to enlarge his view, it would not be best to do it before you had brought him forward into a Christian life.

PRACTICAL INFLUENCES TO BE USED.

While, however, I say that you should accept the development as it comes, in respect to the general character and in respect to its depth and strength, let me also say that there is an interference which you can practice, a guidance which you can effectually furnish. You can do it by personal intercourse with your people. You can do it, but not very well, by general preaching. For example, you will find in a very large class of easy-going people, ordinarily well doing, according to the current opinions of society, a state of moral feeling that is susceptible of great excitement. You preach to them the Divine law and the claims of God upon them, show them that they have been great sinners against holiness, and they will all begin to feel that they sinned in Adam and that they have sinned since Adam. They feel that they are very guilty and need change of heart, and they

will put you off with that. Now, if a woman is a termagant, you must make her conceptions of sin include that element. If a man is cold, hard, proud, it will not do for him to confess Adam's sin, nor any of the generic sins. His sense of sin must cover his particular disposition. If you find a man notoriously stingy, mean, and avaricious, no matter if he shakes in convulsions for his sins against God, that man must have his convictions kept down until he comes to the question of avarice. In short, generic conviction, instead of personal conviction, will not answer; and it is part of your business to produce the latter. If you care to have men really changed, if there is to be something more than ecclesiastical translation, if there is to be a personal renovation, by which a nature is to be sweetened into benevolence, by which a sodden and sordid nature is to be exalted into some of the elements of nobility, by which a coarse and physical nature is to reach up into spiritual realms, — you must search out men and make them search themselves, and find out where there is too much or too little; and their sense of sin must be brought personally home to them, so that all these elements shall be distinctly in their consciousness, when they make their submission or choice before God. That brings matters to a practical reality, and into such a form that you will avoid, or tend to avoid, bringing men into the church under strong general impressions, who, after all, have not changed materially in those individual elements of character that fashion their life.

THE APOSTOLIC THEORY.

The question is not an unimportant one: How thorough ought convictions of sin to be? And that leads me to say that there seems to have been, in times past, an impression that a conversion was more thorough in proportion to the depth, if I may say so, or quantity of feeling which had been expended in the beginning, and that the conversion was probably a shallow one in which a man had not felt immensely and intensely.

I remember very well the time when four or five weeks was a moderate term for a man to go under conviction of sin. I remember when it was supposed that general attention would occupy a week or ten days, and then would come seriousness, which would occupy several days more; then convictions of sin in their lighter form would come, and at last wrestling convictions, and, finally, the crisis; and if, in my childhood, a man was converted in four weeks, it was almost thought an insufficient time. It was against such notions as those that my father used to contend. He was, in some sense, a reformer in those matters.

On the other hand, when we go clear back to the apostolic age, we find men gathered together in great crowds, receiving the truth, and under a single sermon breaking down and crying out, "What shall we do to be saved?" and before they departed becoming so transformed that the Apostles considered them worthy of church-membership.

Here, then, are the two extremes. In the first preaching of Christianity, it was understood that when a man's character and condition were clearly presented

before him, and the question of his adhesion to Christ was pressed upon him, he had it in his power to determine then and there, and if his determination was right, and was carried into practice, the feeling that led to it was enough. In the old New England practice, the impression was that a long-continued, but especially a deep and thorough, conviction of sin was very desirable.

CHANGE OF LIFE THE REAL AIM.

What, after all, is the object of sorrow? What is the use of it? What is the use of pain, when we break a law? To bring us back into obedience to law; simply to rectify that which created the sorrow; and to produce such an impression upon the memory that we shall not be likely to transgress again. Sorrow is not like a dye-vat, in which a man ought to lie overnight in order to bring him a conviction of sin. If a captain wishes to leave port, and the wind is blowing ten miles an hour, he heaves up the anchor, for this is enough to get him far out of port. If he gets out on a breeze of ten miles an hour, it is as good as if he went out on one of twenty. If it requires twenty pounds of steam to work an engine properly, then all above that is waste. Every grain of powder beyond what is necessary to throw a ball where you want it to go is superfluous. And every particle of feeling you expend of this kind, — regretful, sorrowful, remorseful, all that strange medley of emotion, and all that which we do not now analyze, which goes to constitute what is called conviction of sin, — the elements of reason, of imagination, of memory, — all the various sensibilities that play and interplay; of all this, every particle you ex-

pend more than just enough to make a man say, "I am wrong, I will do right," is unnecessary. Just so soon as you get enough feeling to bring about the change, you have accomplished your purpose. Everything more is so much surplusage.

DIFFERENCES OF DISPOSITION.

This is an important consideration, because, in the first place, there are many persons who are thought not to be safe Christians, because they are mild, gentle, and not liable to strong feeling of any kind. I recollect an elder in my church in Indianapolis, when I was a Presbyterian, whose whole life, I think, never had an inch of undulation in it. I think he would smile gently when he married his wife. I think he would smile gently when he buried her. He possessed a perfectly even, tranquil nature. Now the idea that this man should be convulsed with any feeling was absurd. And when he came into the church he said, "I don't remember that I have ever had any exercise of feeling"; and persons were rather slow to receive him. Some men thought there should be more exercise of feeling. Still, he was one of the best of men I ever had in the church, although he glided in almost without emotion. Spring came, in his case, without any breaking up and freshets and storms.

On the other hand, there are many persons whose consciences are never satisfied. They hear a man tell how the Lord led him into the kingdom with terrible manifestations of feeling and with anguish and suffering; how, when he went into a monthly meeting where a revival was going on, conviction struck him and he

went home; how he could find no rest, how he could not attend to his business, he was so wretched; how he kept it from his wife for a week, and by and by such anguish and agony came that he could not eat or sleep, and it seemed to him that soul and body would be rent asunder; how he prayed and prayed, and at last, as he prayed, he saw a vision as a light in the heavens, and he called out, "O Lord! O Lord!" — and there was a terrible wrestling, and something seemed to flood him with the glow of peace, and he came out of his darkness and began to cry, "Hallelujah! hallelujah!" and was so happy! Now, all that is genuine. It is genuine for him; not for me, not for you. But a man hears this, — a man who has been endeavoring to walk honestly with God and honestly with men; who really has the spiritual life developed in him; whose soul dominates his body; who is disinterested, and is always working upward toward higher and higher degrees of excellence, and never has had this dramatic experience, this pictorial conviction of sin; with whom, indeed, it has always been a matter of doubt whether he was really converted or not, — and he says, "If I had only had *that*, I should feel that I had a ticket, a pass that would be valid."

CONVICTION ONLY A MEANS TO CONVERSION.

A man who sleeps on the ground-floor of a tenement house is roused in the night by the cry of fire. He springs up, gathers his wife and children about him, attempts to rush down the main hall-way, and meets the flames coming up. Beaten there, he runs to the rear stairs, — up comes the bulging smoke. He

flies to the next story, and after him comes the flame, roaring and crackling at his heels. From story to story he runs, until he is driven to the roof, while all below him is a sea of flame. He is about to give up, and feels, "I am a dead man, and my household are lost!" when a voice from the gable hails him. A ladder is thrown up. He hands over his children and his wife, and finally he himself gets down and escapes. Everybody congratulates him. "Wonderful escape!" — and so it was a wonderful escape. No wonder he remembers it. And so he is narrating it; and a young man says, "I slept on the ground-floor in that building, and when the engines came thundering along, I jumped up and dressed myself, got all my clothes and valuables, and quietly walked out at the lower door and went away. But if that man's experience is called *escaping,* I fear I have not escaped!"

So it is in respect to changes that are produced in men's minds. The point is this, — that a man shall be born again; that there shall be a new arrangement, if I may say so, a crystallizing of particles, a transformation which consists in the shifting of sovereignty from the bottom of the head to the top. Whereas, before, the animal spirit ruled the man, now, through Jesus Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, all the upper part of a man's nature is vitalized, comes into dominancy, and controls the lower. And whatever process, whether long or short, with visions or without them, with literalness or imaginativeness, with deep or little feeling, — whatever brings a man into that condition, is enough. For conviction of sin is cause merely. If it produces effect, that is all you want; all the exaggerating conception is needless.

PRESENT CHRIST AS THE STANDARD.

Then, if that be the object of conviction of sin, of course all your preaching will tend to the development, the measuring, of a man's character, so that he shall be able to determine continually that he is sinful. You will, in other words, hold out the standard of life, — not an exaggerated one, or an ideal or imaginative one, but a real standard of life in Christ Jesus, as laid down in the New Testament. Measure a man within and without, his understanding, his sensibilities; hold this measure up before him with such continual appeals to his practical knowledge of himself that he will come to the conviction that he is altogether sinful. When I say "altogether sinful," I do not mean total depravity, a very infelicitous phrase, framed under a philosophy in which we do not believe, the technicalities of which we should abandon. But I believe there is not a single faculty in a man's nature that does not sin. I believe in the correlation of faculties. They are all put into false relations with each other in the practical matters of life; and man is in a state of antagonism towards God, towards the Divine law or order.

HELP MEN TO ACTIVELY CHOOSE.

Now, when you have produced that impression upon your congregation, the question becomes simply one of transition. They are satisfied that they have lived wrong; that there is a better way. The point, in the next place, is how to determine choice. I speak with profound feeling here. My own experience, through many stormy years, is wrapped up in this matter. I

feel the profoundest pity for those who are so vaguely stimulated by preaching, but not taught or led to know what to do. As a little child, I was so susceptible of moral impressions that I don't remember a year of my life, after I was seven or eight years old, that I was not under conviction of sin; that I did not go about with a feeling of sadness, — a feeling that I was in danger of exile from heaven, all because I was a sinner, which I did not want to be. There were times when it amounted to positive anguish. There were times of revival in my academic and college course, before I was a member of the church, when, if I could have had the simple truth as it now appears to me, in less than an hour, yes, in a moment, I should have come on to ground of peace and trust, of faith and love, and therefore of hope and courage.

BE SPECIFIC, NOT VAGUE.

It is to the last degree important, therefore, that, in dealing with men, you should know exactly what the point of difficulty is. Do not arouse in your congregation the feeling that they are in danger, and then leave them to hold up their hands vaguely for something, they don't know what.

But this belonged to the old system, to the idea that God acted in his sovereignty upon the hearts of men as he would, when he would, where he would; and that man could do nothing but wait on God. In past times, a man suffered more just in proportion as he was better, — that is, more sensitive in conscience, — and as he yearned for something higher and better; as he added all the susceptibility of a poet to all the

intensity of the moralist; and was left groping for light, without any knowledge of what to do or where to go?

Under such circumstances, how did a man get into the kingdom of God? A great many men did n't get in. They became weary and fell back. A great many got in because, in some way or other, under the general stimulus of singing and social meetings, there did come a vision of Christ that their souls embraced. It filled them with joy, and they passed in.

I sometimes think people get into heaven as a blind man gets into a garden. He happens to strike the first picket on the right-hand side of the gate, and he turns to the next one to the right, and the next, and he finally goes around the whole enclosure, butting against every single picket, though he gets in at last, because finally, in the order of time, he reaches the gate. In other cases, a man may come in by the first intention. What histories might be written of the experiences of Christians! Talk about the Inquisition! The Inquisition has no chambers in which there has been such suffering as in the silent chambers of unrecorded spiritual histories, — such excruciating sorrows, such useless sufferings! If you don't know how to lead men into light, don't plunge them into darkness.

THE TWO ELEMENTS OF ACTION.

What, then, is the thing men are called to do when they are awakened and become conscious of their wrong estate? It seems to me there are simply two elements in it. One is the presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ as the manifest idea of God. Jesus Christ, as

he walked on earth, is to be presented to man. That is the pattern of himself which God wishes men to have before them when they determine whether or not they will serve him. It is in that point of view that I condemn Calvinism with such severity, if not acerbity. When I take Calvin's view of God and put it by the side of Jesus Christ, who suffered that men might not suffer, who came to shed his blood and die that men might be redeemed, — when I put this by the side of the systematic God that Calvin has erected, I feel an unspeakable horror, a shock in my whole moral being. I say to my people: Whatever may be the logical excellence of that system, — and it is a wonderful system of ratiocination and skillful construction, — whatever may be the general truth of it, one thing is certain, that the cross of Christ bore up no such conception of God as that which is given to us in the Calvinistic representation of God. I take, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ as the manifestation of God. I take the life of Christ as it was upon earth, and hold it up to my people, and say: Here is the companionable God, who would in heaven do just as he did on earth, only more gloriously and abundantly. As he himself said, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him."

Now see what he was among men. See how he took them to his arms of helpfulness! What humility! What patience! What gentleness, sweetness, instructiveness, long loving! What balm in his sympathy! What healing power in the application of his loving heart to the hearts of those that were around him!

The presentation of Christ's character as the sinner's friend is, beyond all other things, the most sublime and the most glorious. That my soul knows right well. I had wandered through years and years, trying to submit to a theological God, trying to submit to a catalogue of attributes. I had gone through the seminary, and had nearly completed my theological course, inwardly unbelieving. It was my duty to take a Bible-class. I did it unwillingly. I undertook to do what the German commentators did, with whom I was then familiar. They undertook to interpret the New Testament just as they found it, without saying that they believed in it any more than in Homer and Virgil. I took the subject of the relations of Christ to men out of the four Evangelists and presented it to my class in that way; and, as I went on, gathering everything of Christ as a conversationist, Christ as a personal friend,— I remember the brightest day that ever dawned on this earth, since moon and stars shone upon it, was that morning while I was studying the thought of Christ, and it flashed upon me, as the result of all the facts and instances that I had been selecting, that Christ was one who by perfect holiness and purity knew how to be sorry, not for the man who was converted, but for the unconverted man, because he was sinning. He was sorry, as the nurse or the mother is sorry for the child because it is sick. It dawned upon me, "This is God, to be sorry for imperfection; this is God, to be sorry that men are in the bondage of sin and in the thrall of death; and the resource and power of the Divine nature are offered to those that are bad to help them out of their badness."

So there had been my trouble always. I could not make myself good enough for God to take me; and I spent hours, yes, I squandered days and days, in fruitless prayer and agonizing search to find a God who would do something for me, or to find that experience that was to come radiant down through the atmosphere and lodge upon my soul. I could never find it. But when I found that the nature of love is to make lovely things; that the nature of purity is to make uncleanness pure; that the nature of holiness is to inspire holiness among men; and that God's government is to take the poor, the needy, and feeble in his arms to help them, loving them all the time while he is doing it, to help them to himself, — I no longer suffered, for I had found my Father which is in heaven.

Now, present that character of Christ to men, saying, "Do you want this Christ, do you want this God? Is this your choice?" I think you will find them coming quick and thick around such presentations of Jesus Christ, to say, "My Lord and my God!" Everything that is good in man responds to it. Everything that is base in man slinks away, dishonored and disgraced, if it obstructs the heart's allegiance to such a God as that.

THE IDEAL MANHOOD.

Then, secondly, you want to present the character of typical manhood as laid down in the New Testament. Are you prepared to say, to-day, "I will accept and love that blessed Saviour, and that life and that character shall be my search from this day forward to the end of my life"? When a man says, "Yes, that I take, and

that I acknowledge to be hereafter my life," the man is a Christian. What is a Christian? A saint? Yes, I hope so, though it is tough for some saints in the calendar. But so is a man a Christian out of whose mind has leaped that purpose. When is a seed a plant? Just as quick as it has begun to shoot a root down one way and a stem up the other. It is not a grown plant, but it is a plant just as truly as it ever will be. And when is a man a Christian? The moment he accepts Christ and the purposes of life which Christ ordained, by precept and example; the moment he says, "That is the charter of my life. I hold myself bound by those laws." The instant a man puts the honest purposes of the Christian forward, he has begun to be a Christian. "What! without any transport?" Yes, with or without. "Without any fruit yet?" Yes, with or without. That is the initial point; — the point at which a man with his purpose or will goes over to that view of Jesus Christ, and accepts that ideal of manhood as his own, and then begins to act accordingly, he has started.

VARIED EXPERIENCES.

Now, in the development of this purpose, you will find, as in the process of conviction, a wide range of variation which you ought not to desire to contract. You ought to rejoice that the God who made ten thousand forms of flowers, and who differentiates throughout the physical world, also makes every man different from all others. This variety constitutes an element of intense interest and profound sympathy. There will be many persons who will come gliding into this state of mind as naturally as a cloud forms. Of all the

things that take place in nature, there is nothing so ethereal, so ineffable, as the birth of a cloud. If you have spent a summer in a mountain region, you have had an opportunity of seeing them form in long sequence. Overhead there is perfect clarity, deep blue, the air as clear as crystal, and when you first look there is nothing else; but before you have ceased to look, within a glance of the eye, there is a slight opacity, a haze; — you look again and it is a cloud. A breath brings it, swiftly and silent. And there are some souls that move almost as ethereally as that. I have known persons who came into the Christian life with as little friction, as little ado, as little conspicuity, and yet with as much certainty, as a cloud forms in the pure summer mountain air. Bless God for such! Praise him, thank him! Do not disturb them. If they love Christ, if their hearts gush out in praise, if they betake themselves to the ways of Christian life, its dispensations its bounty, its magnanimity, its generosity, its truth, its self-government, its ardent passion of life, its self-denial in love, — if they betake themselves to these moods and life, never put them back by asking "In what way did you come? What was your experience?" If a child brings me to-day a bunch of spring beauties, or hepatica, or that sweetest blossom that grows in the breast of humility under russet leaves, the mayflower, the trailing arbutus, I will ask no questions where they grew. The flower itself is its own evidence of orthodoxy.

There are many that come into the kingdom of God by this attraction. I know that a great many persons would say to such people, "Was there a very great struggle when you began to love God?" I used to

have a member on my examining committee who questioned everybody that came into the church with "Do you remember any time when you hated God?" "No," said a sweet young maiden; "I do not remember a time when I did not love him." That would not do; that was a fatal defect, in his judgment. Why, I rejoiced in it! I said to her, "Hold on, my child, hold on; don't let him dash you. You are right, and he is wrong." It is good sometimes to make deacons ashamed before young people. When the image of the Lord Jesus Christ comes before such a soul, its nature goes right over towards him. Who shall dare stand between such a soul and the Master who has found it?

I have presented this picture to many persons, who would clearly understand the conditions of salvation, as they are called, and yet who had a vague impression that something else had got to come. They had had none of those Dantean purgatorial experiences; they did n't know that they might *believe* and call that being Christians; and so they waited. I have often found that, by bringing the amplitude and impetuosity of my own hope to bear upon them, I could give them great help. Why, I have for a man, in such times as that, labor-pain. And when I find a man that has got the right condition and the right feeling, I can *put him in*, if he won't go in otherwise. I can put him in with an afflatus of hope, with an exulting push of my soul on his soul, and say to him, "O gazer! O lingering child! you are right, you are right; that is your Christ. Take him, take him, you are near him, his hand is on you." And with my certainty and the excitement of my soul and its sympathy with his, before he knows it

he is right over on the other side of the rise. Well, may not men be brought over by hope? I say that when you bring before men the vision of Christ, not crucified, but the Christ that lives again and lives forever, compared with whose bright face the sun itself is darkness, — bring that conception of the living God of love before a man, and I do not care by what door of his faculties he may come out to him. He may come by fear; it is the worst one. He may come by conscience; it is good enough. O, but let him come by love, by sweet sympathy; it is better than all. It is better that the child that has gone away should come home for the most selfish reasons, than that he should not come at all; yet if he come by filial sorrow and noble motives it is the best way to come. But *any* way, so that he comes! In general, however, I think it may be said that more persons may be won by the love of Christ, by the presentation of these brighter views of his character and love, than by any other means.

Of course I do not purpose, in this brief lecture, to go into the analysis of all the phenomena, — they are endless, — nor to give you a registration of the classes, of the infinite number of cases that will occur. It is a part of your privilege and your enjoyment to learn these yourself, in your own ministry. I wish only to leave an impression of the simplicity, the naturalness, the ease, with which one may make the transition from the natural life, in which the lower faculties predominate, to the spiritual life, in which the higher or religious faculties are in the ascendant.

AFTER CONVERSION.

When men have been brought to this state of conscious sinfulness and feel their need of a change of life within and without, when they have had the part which they are to choose clearly presented before them, and made the choice, what will be the result? Well, that will depend a great deal upon circumstances, too. I have heard men say that they went to bed unconscious of loving God, and woke up in the morning in a transport. They think they were converted in their sleep. I don't think so, — though I have seen men in church who, if they ever were converted, would have to undergo the process while asleep. But I have no question whatever that a change often takes place unconsciously in men, when the mental processes have been so graded, the instruction and the approaches have been so gradual, that they could not tell when it came. When you go by the Pacific Railroad to California, you do not know where the maximum grade is. You go up over the Rocky Mountains with such a gentle slope, all the time rising, rising, rising, that when you stop at last, and they tell you that you are on the summit level, you are amazed; you thought that the summit level was such that you would be plunged up and plunged down in getting there; but it was like going through a meadow, the rise was so gradual. I have seen many men with such experiences as that in regard to their Christian growth. And the question should be, simply, Do they live right? have they the right dispositions? are they moving in spiritual directions? If they are, no matter how gradually they passed from death to life. When the spark

is first struck, it does not glow; you shield it darkling, you feed it, you have smoke before flame, and then by and by a little light; but if you still feed it, the light shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. So a person may be soundly converted and really a Christian, and may have passed over into the promised land of faith and hope, though he has no milestone to tell him when he passes the line, and there are no phenomena to flame it in heaven or to proclaim it on the earth.

Then there are persons who have the most distinct and clear perceptions of change. Mr. Riggs, who was in college when I was, and who afterwards went abroad as a missionary, was one morning sitting in his room conversing on the subject of religion with a friend, who told him what he thought was necessary in order to become a Christian. "Is that it?" asked young Riggs. "Yes, that is it." "Then," said he, "I am going to live that life." And without any conviction of sin he made a purely intellectual decision, and it was followed at once by his affections and his actual honest life. He he became not only a Christian man, but an eminent Christian man.

On the other hand, there are tempestuous natures, natures that break out into intense emotion. I do not think these dramatic conversions are necessary, but still, if a man's mind works in such a way that when he first gains a clear vision of God and embraces him, and is conscious that all resistance has ceased, and that he is willing to abandon all evil ways and enter upon all righteous ways; when he feels within himself, "I have passed from death to life,"—if there is a transporting sense of joy and surprise, I stand by and say he has

a right to his individuality and his own experience. All I ask is that he shall not make that experience a despotic standard for his quieter brethren.

There was an old Methodist preacher in Virginia, in earlier times, who gave his experience, in which — as he said — the spirit of God "walloped" him, and he could get no peace. He told how it drove him out of his house, away from his business and into the fields; how he "wallowed in conviction," as he expressed it. He seems to have been a great, strong nature; and he finally bowed down in the field before God, he said — he was a slaveholder and had nine negro men, — and prayed, "Why, Lord, why is it that you deal so with me? Tell me what is in the way, and I will give it up!" "And, brethren," said he, "I saw nine black niggers standing right up before me, and I said, 'Yes, Lord, I will give them up.' And the next moment I was on my feet hollering, 'Hallelujah! Hallelujah!' That was genuine. I think there are a great many men that might be converted in that way. Men who give false weights and measures, who are doing iniquity on the sly, when they come to the Lord Jesus Christ, they come with a consciousness that they are bringing such unworthy things! When you go to see one whom you love and who desires to love you, what care it inspires within you! How you apparel yourself with that which is sweetest and best! How you take from yourself everything that would be disagreeable! How you seek beauty, and wear it in flowers! How you come into the presence of those you love, honoring them by everything that you think would be sweet and pleasant to them! And when one goes before the Lord Jesus

Christ to offer himself up in love, a loving sacrifice, shall he hide deceits? Shall he hide gross appetites and lusts? Nay, verily; when a man has come to the time of decision, let him take the worst things about himself, the "nine black niggers" before him; and then let him place Christ right over them, ascendant, triumphant. Let him put down his sins, — let them go down in the act of consecration. If there is this transport of emotion, that is his way; he has just as much right to it as the English have to speak English, the French to speak French. But the test of his conversion from the love of sin to the desire for holiness is to be found, not in the manner of its happening but in the life that follows it. "By their *fruits* ye shall know them."

I draw my lectures to a close this evening. I never part for a whole year's separation from any one without the consciousness that it may be the last parting. It is not sorrow that this inspires in me, though it is sadness; but it is a sweet sadness, a tempered sadness. Young gentlemen, many of you may cut short your labors on earth before the time comes round again for the resumption of this course of lectures, should they ever be resumed. Some of you may pass to a higher ministry before that time. Many of you will pass out into the field and begin your earthly ministration. I can ask for you in either case nothing so good as this, — a sense of the love of Jesus Christ to you; — not how much you love him, but the sense of the overflowing affluence of the love of Christ for you! And I can bear you this witness, that not all friendship, not praise, not

success in life, not the joy which I experience in communion with nature, not the rapturous and exquisite sensations in the presence of things beautiful, nothing in earth, has ever been to me such strength, such constant joy, as the sense that Christ loved me while I was a sinner, and as I am a sinner, and because I am a sinner; that, because I am sick, he is my physician; and because I am weak, he is my captain; and because I am imperfect, he is my "all and in all." And, therefore, as the consummation of every earthly ambition and as the assurance of everything that is richest and best, I can only wish you the consciousness of a living Saviour; a high-priest, merciful, patient, long-suffering: a present help in time of trouble. Christ loves you with overwhelming love; may you know it and rejoice in it!

LECTURES ON PREACHING.

THIRD SERIES.

METHODS OF USING CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES.

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Lectures on Preaching.

I.

THE PREACHER'S BOOK.

February 11, 1874.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I MEET you again, gentlemen, with mingled pleasure and pain: pleasure, because I perceive many familiar faces, and because in a general way it is pleasant to perform the tasks that are allotted to me; pain, because I regard the course of lectures on which I am entering this winter as by far the most difficult of all that I have been called to deliver. It will take me over the very line where the theological storm has raged through every age; for theology is a perpetual witness of the truth of the Lord's saying. Said he, "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword"; and so he sent theologians and ecclesiastics! And, as you are aware, it is not an easy thing to be interjected upon a regular course like this, not in consultation with the stated teachers; not knowing what grounds they are laying out for you, what discriminations they are making, what advices they are giving.

Certainly, it would be painful for me to stand in your midst, and find myself traversing that which is regarded by your teachers as sound and very necessary in the equipment of ministers for the field. I do not much feel that I shall traverse the substantial facts that underlie all theology; and yet, I have from the very beginning of my ministry worked from the standpoint of a different philosophy from that which has been employed in times past, and according to a different method; so that, even while feeling after the same great truths which others are seeking for, I may place them in lights which make them apparently antagonistic, in a doctrinal form, to those that were held by the fathers, or are held by my brethren in the ministry. On such grounds, therefore, I might be considered "unsound," and not worthy to be called an orthodox man. And yet, in regard to the great elements of human nature, of the divine nature, of the essential principles of moral government, and its ends and aims, and of the means employed in the great scheme of salvation through Jesus Christ, I hold myself to be perfectly sound, and, if anything, *sounder than other folks!*

So it really is a kind of vacillation, rather than anxiety, that I feel in speaking to you, as I shall, in respect to the nature of man as universally sinful, but susceptible of development out of animal conditions into spiritual conditions; and in respect to the other main doctrines of your belief. For as to the reality and glory of a personal God, revealed to us in the New Testament, in three persons, — in other words, the doctrine of the Trinity; the ever-blessed truth of the

divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; the history of his life-work, constituting substantially an atonement for the sins of the world; the doctrine of the power of the Holy Ghost, sent forth from God, by which man, who needs to be born out of natural life into spiritual life, is regenerated by the development in him of all-controlling Christian sentiments,—a new will and new spiritual power; the essential elements of faith and hope; the great truths of two-world life and immortality,— in regard to all these great, substantial, and underlying facts, I suppose I stand with the good men who have lived since the day that Paul left the earth; and I hold them not merely in curiosity, nor from a love of their logical affinities and their structural fitness, but as the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation.

It is my errand among you now to try to show you how you may do by the great truths of theology that which Paul said he did, namely, use them as God's wisdom and God's power for the *salvation of men*,— their salvation, through a change into a salvable disposition, so that they may be made perfect men in Christ Jesus. And if, while doing this, in presenting the different ways in which doctrines can be held and used, I should vary from the ordinary modes of teaching, and if many of you think the variation is a dangerous one, all I can say is this: that there is an advantage in seeing things in different lights, and that there will be twelve months in which the professorial hoe can cut up the weeds that I shall have sown during my brief six weeks of lecturing. So that, if I make errors, and they are the occasion of bringing out the truth more strongly than it otherwise would have been brought out, and with

greater interest on your part, I am willing to be refuted and set at naught in order that you may be made stronger, wiser, and better ministers.

SOURCES OF TRUTH.

Before I enter upon the main theme of this course of lectures, namely, Functional Theology, as distinguished from Structural Theology, — Christian doctrines, as they are related, not to the building up of a system, but to the development of the living character, — it is proper to consider the sources whence the pulpit is to derive the great truths which it employs in its work upon the souls of men.

SCIENCE.

These are the more to be considered because we have certainly come to a time in which the educated mind is tending to fall off from the teachings of the pulpit. I do not know how far, in the country districts and quieter towns, the educated feeling has let go of religion, as it has been hitherto taught in the churches; but I am confident that in our large cities and centers, and particularly in circles of artists, of scientists, and of literary men, there is an essential unclasping of the public mind in this respect; and we hear thousands saying, "The pulpit has had its day; these old-fashioned doctrines have no more juice in them; and, according to the great principle of evolution, we have so far grown that at last the whole world is becoming man's text-book, and the minister ought to preach to his people the elements of sound physical life and health, the great sociological laws, the great civil laws,

and the great laws of political economy." In short, there are many men who would tell you that now, in the light that has been growing through the ages, the time has come in which Science is to be the savior of the world, that the minister should be its instrument, and that the pulpit should be the place where it is taught, in its relations to life and duty.

Far be it from me to undervalue science, which I believe to be one of the revelations of God in this world. The heavens declare his glory, and the earth shows his hand-work; and if rightly understood, and reverently observed, they lead us back to God: but physical science has not in it the power to develop spirituality in man. When taught only upon this lower plane of knowledge, — namely, the knowledge which they can see, and hear, and smell, and taste, and handle, — men can never become spiritual. They may have some slight impetus through the imagination in that direction, — for even scientists are beginning to say that in science there must be a sphere for the imagination; but those profounder depths of man, out of which come self-abnegation and sublime enthusiasm, those powers which lead a man to sacrifice himself, to live joyfully without joy, to have bread without wheat, to have light without vision, to be powerful by the world that is unseen and the God that is invisible, to have a life supreme, dominating over other lives, — these you can never find on the plane of mere sensuous knowledge. As an auxiliary, material science is invaluable; but it touches man only in the lower sphere of life, and never exalts him into that higher realm upon which he may enter as a Christian.

THE CHURCH.

It is thought by others that our knowledge should be drawn chiefly from the revelation of God through his Church; and that in the Church, in its economies, in its creeds, and especially in its sacraments, we have elements of power and of education which are all-sufficient. And under these impressions, many turn themselves to the Church. Nor do I wonder, altogether, that they should do so; for there is a certain sort of weary men, who will tell you that they find *rest* in the Church.

I had the pleasure of a correspondence with certain ladies who had gone into a convent of the Roman Catholic Church, and who were amiably desirous that I also should become a true Christian. The point which they continually made with me was that they never found any rest until they went into the Church, but that there they found it. And this fact is the very argument which I employ to show that the external church is a false church. For I observe that when water is pure and sweet, it is always moving: here it is leaping down the mountain-side; there it is sliding smoothly, though only for a while, through the level stretches of the meadows; yonder it is plunging again down the descent, foaming, and cleansing itself by foaming, in the air; and when at last it reaches the deep pool, it comes to where the mud settles, slime thickens, scum gathers, and spores breed. In stagnant pools are to be found, it is true, rest and quiet; but death also is to be found there.

I hold that in this world it was not designed that

men should rest. I hold that exercise, or, in other words, excitement, is the indispensable condition of evolution or education; and that neither the outward world nor the church world was ever designed of God to be constructed so that a man should find things as he wants them, all thought out for him, rules being laid down for every part of his life, duties being prescribed for every hour of the day, and doctrines being made so clear to him that he can no more mistake them than the mineralogist can mistake the facets and angles of a crystal; so that all that a receptive man has to do is to go into the Church, and count the things which are to be done, and do them in their order. It is true that there is little to do under such circumstances. There are less tasks, and there are fewer responsibilities. There is a sort of attraction in church life, to many natures, on these accounts. But it is not in any such way that God has ever educated the race, and it is not in any such way that the race will ever be educated. And yet, as auxiliaries to the true method, I recognize the benefits of church orders and church institutions, and especially in the claim of the Roman Catholic Church, and of the Hierarchy generally, do I see a certain element of beauty which Protestants do not like to recognize.

That God does present the truth to men through the Church I believe; for I hold the Church to be the body of earnest Christian-living, right-thinking men in every age. It is stating the simplest thing in the world to say that our knowledge is the result of the experience of the true men who have lived in the past, clear down to our time; and that the truth is to be learned, not in an organic church, not on account of the fact that there

is a boundary of church lines and beliefs, but for the reason that it is a part of the evolution which God carries on in society at large, of which the Church may partake, but which the Church has no right to arrogate to itself. And as between a dead record, an Egyptian hieroglyph on a stone or column, a statement written out on papyrus, or printed, — a statement that is just so long, and just so broad, and that cannot be changed one whit, — as between this and the theory that the truth is revealed by the Spirit in the *living moral consciousness of God's people*, I would incomparably rather have the latter.

THE BIBLE.

Therefore I come to the ground that the sources of truth are to be found in the Word of God, as it is held, felt, and interpreted by the living reason and moral consciousness of Christian men, — the Word of God, not as a dead record, but as interpreted by vital souls, with such auxiliaries as they can receive, namely, the development of the natural world, the disclosures of Divine Providence, the experiences of good men, and the illumination of the Holy Ghost.

A Bible alone is nothing. A Bible is what the man is who stands behind it, — a book of hieroglyphics, if he be nothing but a spiritual Champollion; a book of rituals, if he be nothing but a curiosity-monger, or an ingenious framer of odds and ends of things; and a valuable guide, full of truth and full of benefit for mankind, if he be a great soul filled with living thought. What the Bible is, is shown in the men who use it. It is not in the letter that the Word of God has power,

but in the *spirit;* and the living man is that spirit; and as far as he, using the Word of God, takes it up into himself, and bears it out to others, so far he is the Bible for the time being. And in your ministry this vitalized Bible is the main source of the power which you are to wield as Christian preachers.

ITS AIM, — SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF MAN.

Let me speak some words more, then, in respect to the Bible, which is the fountain whence we must all of us draw. And in the first place I wish to say that we find in this book (and nowhere else that I know of, except where it has exerted its influence) the aim to *unfold mankind by a moral power which is developed within them.*

There have been educating forces of various kinds in existence since the world began; but I know of no other source besides the sacred Canon that has so consistently poured forth such a stream of influence. From the earliest of the records, without disconnection, and without its being ostentatiously proclaimed, but in reality, down to the last letter of the last book, the Holy Scriptures have one genius, namely, the exertion of a power for the development of men, not as animals, nor even as social creatures, but as moral beings, possessing the germs of the Divine nature, and to be developed by the infusion of the Divine Spirit upon their higher faculties. That truth dawned in the earliest ages. It was taught by the prophets, it appeared in the most disastrous periods of Jewish history again and again, leading to temporary reformations; it broke out more potently and more gloriously in the New

Testament dispensation; and to the preaching of it by the Apostles during the last days of that epoch there has been no parallel, that I know of. So, the genius of the Bible is the development of man into a spiritual creature.

When men tell me, therefore, that the Bible is a collection of books (or a "clutter" of books, as they are sometimes pleased to call it), written in different ages, in different languages, from different standpoints, and by different men, and that there are a thousand discrepancies in it, I say that there is one spinal cord which runs through it from the beginning to the end, but of the importance, the power, and the glory of which the world has been largely unconscious, — namely, the development, by education, of the essential nature of man, his true nature, out of the animal, and out of the lower forms of society-life, into the higher spiritual form. The Bible is instinct with that element, and glows with it all the way through. Nowhere else can you find such inexhaustible stores in that direction as in the Word of God.

ITS TENDER SYMPATHY.

Then, it is a book which overflows with sympathy for men. We like those who like us, and what thank have we? We salute those who salute us, and what thank have we? Kings always like kings, especially when they have got them under; philosophers are apt to think well of philosophers; rich men think well of rich men; friends think well of friends; connections think well of kindred; men love to praise men of their own nation. But here, in the midst of the history of

rude selfishness and class-instincts and personal preferences, we have a book, coming to us in fragments, little by little accumulating, which all through, from beginning to end, looks at man in the most sympathetic and tender relations, not because of agreeable or harmonious qualities, but on account of his *imperfections*, just as a mother looks at the cradle. She looks at the cradle, not on account of what the child says, — it does not talk; not on account of what the child does, — it does nothing; nor does she look at the child altogether on account of what it is to be: she looks at it on account of its weakness and helplessness, and its need of her fidelity and love and care. Now, in the Word of God we have the mother-instinct all the way through, — a tender sympathy for man, as poor, as weak, as ignorant, as degraded, as sinful, as damnable. *Because* he is so sinful the Bible has infinite compassion upon him. It breathes this spirit toward him in all its relations, from beginning to end.

Men go back to the Old Testament, questioning and searching, to ascertain whether there is a revelation of the Messiah; and of the atonement; and of the divine nature; or whether there are symbols of these things: but I go so far as to say that the very breath of the Old Testament is the same breath that prayed, dying, on Calvary; and that the bosom that gives nutriment in the New Testament is the same bosom that fed God's people in the Old Testament, both of them being instinct with sympathy for men, not because they have genius, because they have attained to wealth and position, because they are strong and successful; but because they are poor and needy.

Now, when you consider that this book has come up from barbaric ages, amid warring thrones and bloody-footed armies, the world groaning and travailing with cruelties everywhere, and men, like waste material, like mud in the streets, being trampled under foot by power; when you consider that through dark periods of the world this book came up, little by little, breathing the spirit of humanity all the time, — do you tell me that it was an accident, and that I need those exterior and scholastic arguments for its divinity which men seem to think will affirm it? No, verily!

ITS ADAPTEDNESS TO COMMON LIFE.

Then I find another thing, namely, that it is a book which is pitched to the key of common life, and not to an artificial key. Many a man wishes that the Bible had not been, in some respects, just what it is. Many people wish that the Bible produced more sudden and startling sensation, or that it constantly had tremendous strokes in it, which should overawe the minds of men, or fascinate their imaginations. Many persons want the Bible to act on men as Sinai acted on the common people who were at its base; and if it had acted on them thus, they would have been affected about as the Israelites were, who, hearing the voice of the thunder and worshiping God one day, danced around a calf the next.

Now I find, in going through the Bible, scarcely a single element which when it was written was not familiar to the minds of the common people. In other words, it took its keynote from those great qualities which are common to humanity, and addressed itself to

them. In every age, and in all nations, men are very much alike; the great underlying element of humanity is the same in all race-stocks. Men are said to have sprung from five primitive stocks. I believe that the revered Agassiz and others have thought that the race proceeded from twenty different stocks. I do not know about that; but of this I am sure, that if they did start from twenty different stocks, they all had the same mold; because it is beyond all conception or belief, it is out of the question, that there should have been five, or ten, or fifteen, or twenty variations of nature; that there should have been numerous differentiations resulting in man, and that these differentiations should have produced men so exactly alike; that the basilar faculties, and the perceptive faculties, and the reflective faculties should have been so identical in all the race that one man could understand another, and that men of different stocks could reason with each other. Such a thing would be an impossibility.

What I say is, that in the one comprehensive race, in all the minor races included in it, there are certain underlying particulars which are the same; and the word of God addresses itself to them. To be sure, we have in it some philosophical language, but what was philosophy in those days of the world when the Bible was constructed? Solomon, it is true, had some time (aside from his domestic cares) in which to philosophize; but compare the philosophy of President Porter with the proverbs of Solomon. Compare Cousin's writings, compare Sir William Hamilton's writings, compare the writings of any modern master of philosophy, with the philosophy of the olden time. Then,

philosophy was a collection of proverbs. It was the wisdom of the people reduced to its narrowest, simplest, and most striking form; so that nowhere in the Old Testament is there a large generic view of the moral government of God over this world. There is nowhere in the early writings of the Bible any systematic teaching in respect to human nature.

In our day men wonder at Bishop Butler's writings, and speak of him as the originator, in his time, of new schools, which, as it were, sprang from his loins. I do not undertake to say that he taught the presence of that same divine creative genius in the natural world which is pointed out all the way through the Bible, and in harmony with which the Bible itself is constructed; but although he did not say expressly what he thought, beyond a question he did think that the Bible was the highest and the sublimest part of the natural world, and that it was natural, not in the sense in which we speak of nature as degraded, but in the sense that it belonged to that unitary work in which things physical, things social, things intellectual, and things moral are intersphering and moving together. Without a doubt it was his belief that the creation of God's Word is part and parcel of the whole advancement which is taking place in mankind.

ITS WEALTH OF MATERIAL.

In the natural world we never find tools ready made, we never find implements constructed for our use, we never find machines, varied and complicated, with which to carry on the processes of life; but we find iron in the earth, out of which to make these things.

We never find, in the natural world, knives and lancets to our hands; but we find there the ore out of which steel is made for their manufacture. In the natural world we find the raw material for the supply of our physical wants; and it is our business to take this raw material and work it up.

Now, the Word of God is filled full of material for philosophy, but there is no philosophy in it. It is full of material for constructing a theory of human life, but there is no theory of human life in it. It is full of material for ethics, but there is no system of ethics laid down in it. It does not contain a prescribed system. On the same principle that it is said to a man in the natural world, "Work or starve, dig or go without iron," it is said to him in the word of God, "There is nothing prepared for you here." The Bible is a great book stored with much that is beautiful and valuable, and which men can gain by digging and working it, as ore from a mine, but in no other way.

The Bible, then, while it is in analogy with the development of God's providence in every other sphere, has this advantage, that it is a book which aims at the level of every man's understanding. Out of it can be formed rules and schemes for the conduct of life, as from the wool on a sheep's back you can form a garment. You can shear the wool; then with deft fingers on the wheel, you can draw the thread out a thousand times longer than it grew; then you can twist it and dye it with colors that it never had before; then you can put it into the loom, whose shuttles swing back and forth almost like intelligent messengers, and make the fabric; and then you can fashion it into a garment.

This garment did not grow on the sheep's back; but all the way along it has been in the workshop of the human brain. It was man that made it, although the material out of which it was made came from the sheep.

Now, what worlds of thought there have been! What vast evolutions there have been in the realm of mind! What disclosures there have been in the higher spheres of knowledge! How illimitable has been the scope of living experience! What prophecies there have been! How much has been set forth in poetry! What historical records have been made! In ten thousand forms there have been arguments and teachings in schools and churches. There have been philosophies multitudinous and multifarious. Of statistics there has been no end. Vast has been the outcome of those things. And the germs of them all were and are in the Bible. Germs so simple are they, that the plainest man, that even a child, could understand them.

The Bible, therefore, is a book for men, and for men that are low down in the scale, — for to this day nine tenths of the inhabitants of the globe are but children, or are less intelligent than children among us. So that the great work of the Bible in the world has begun, but not ended. It was made to meet the wants of common men, or men less than common; it is in sympathy with them; it is formed out of material which can be shaped to their need; and its methods are within their easy reach.

You think that when you preach you must preach so as to touch the top heads in your congregation. Touch the bottom and you will be sure to touch the

top. He that puts a jackscrew under the roof is not going to raise the whole building; but he who puts a jackscrew under the sills of a building, and raises them up, will, I think, take up everything that is above them. And in preaching, the man who is in dead earnest, who is inflamed by divine love, and who preaches so that the lowest and poorest of his congregation understand him and are stirred by what he says, and are lifted up by the power of the truth as he presents it, — does he not lift everybody else up too?

THE VALUE OF ITS WASTE MATTER.

I want to say another thing about the Bible; for I am held to be so erratic on many subjects, that I must make my calling and election sure where I can!

I glory in its chaff and straw. People ask me, frequently, "Is there not a great deal in the Bible that is useless?" Yes, there is, — commentators, for instance, often! "But," say they, "are there not a great many histories, and stories, and such like things, that could be purged out from the Bible with great advantage?" Well, I should like to know what you would do for wheat if you had the same contempt for straw in April and May that you have in July and August. What is your wheat in the spring? A little sucking babe. What is your straw then? A full-breasted mother feeding the wheat. What is the chaff but the bosom of the plant? It is the mother's arm around it, protecting it and carrying it. "It is nothing but chaff and straw," men say; but, I tell you, the farmer talks about chaff and straw one way in spring and another way in autumn.

Now, since the Word of God was gradually constructed; since it was upbuilt through two thousand years; since its method was the development of truth through experience, through a revelation of God by the experience of holy men; one thing coming out by mistake, another thing coming out by forethought; some virtues being made clearer by corresponding vices, the bitterness of which taught men the right way, broken laws teaching men where laws should be infrangible; since all parts of the Word of God have been applied as they were wrought out, all along, in this way, are not these old wrecks, these broken commandments, these mistakes and stumblings, invaluable in the history of the evolution of the moral sense of mankind? Is it for us, because the record of these things remains in history, to scoff and scorn them? I honor the chaff and the straw. I like to see where the truths of the Bible got their effulgence; where their roots were; where they grew; what took care of them; what their primitive forms were.

We have some analogies to these things in the present. You do not need to go four thousand years back to see antiquity. It is right under our feet, and everywhere about us. We see it where men are living squalid, like savages. Antiquity is in our very midst. Much that the Bible contains you may not want in elegant leisure; you may not want it in poetical ease; you may not want it in philosophical enjoyment; there may be circumstances in this later civilization, in which you do not want it — or think you do not: but it is a book that mankind need; it is a book for mankind; it is a book of mankind; and there is no greater mistake that

men are making than the criticising the Bible from their own selfish standpoint; do not say of any part of the Bible, "I do not want this, and therefore nobody wants it."

ITS HARMONY WITH ADVANCING TRUTH.

Let me only hint at one other thing. You know that we are all of us under very great alarm, just now, because Mr. Darwin is going to take away Christianity; and it is proper that all of us who are orthodox should shake our heads wisely when his name is mentioned, or when his philosophy is spoken of. Far be it from me, therefore, to say anything in favor of Mr. Darwin! But he has read his Bible, evidently, and has taken many ideas from Paul; for I find that Paul's theory of the natural man, and Mr. Darwin's theory of the animal man, are very near together; and that the whole line of apostolic thought in regard to the inner man and the outer man has a strange resemblance to the thought which Mr. Darwin is feeling after. You will observe that Paul went so far as to almost deny his own personality, as an animal. He says, "There is a law of the flesh, there is a beast-law, in me, and there is also in me a law of the spirit, a God-law; and these two laws are not reconciled. The animal runs away with me every day: I hold on, but he runs away with me; and as not the animal, but the higher spiritual man is I, it is not I that sin, but the animal. I dwell in a body that sins. Here is an inner man and an outer man; an upper man and an under man; a spiritual man and an animal man." This idea runs all the way through Paul's epistles. Not only so,

but all the way through the Bible there is a representation of man as being a creature of time, a creature with a lower nature, but with the germs of a higher nature in him, which is developing slowly toward the highest elevation that it is capable of reaching; it is only when this higher nature is developed so that the light of God's soul is struck through it, and it is in affinity with the Divine, that the man is an unfolded child of God. And he cannot get the power of such development until he grows in the sunshine of God's own soul; until the mind and will and heart of God touch his mind and will and heart.

But above all and beyond all this philosophy, physical or metaphysical, that can be found in its germforms in the Bible, is that representation which is made of the ideal God. By *the ideal God* I do not mean any fictitious and poetic conception of God; I mean that view of God which we frame by the best effort of our understanding, with all our imagination working in the great invisible moral realm.

THE DIVINE STRENGTH OF ITS INFANCY.

I know that truth is slow in developing. If you were to find a perfect alphabet in a savage's hut, you would say that it was brought there. If it could be shown that a savage had invented a new language, and was using it, it would be considered an anomaly. It would be so different from the ordinary experience of men in all time, that no man would believe it.

Nothing impresses me more than to go back and see how the patriarchs lived. Abraham, a respectable old sheikh of the desert, hardly ever said or did anything

worth remembering. He was powerless, comparatively speaking. Isaac was a very mild shadow of his father. Jacob was a substantial man, to be sure; he was politic and diplomatic; he was a good manager, — a very excellent manager. And while I look upon the characters of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, I cannot understand how they could have been so dear to the Jews. Measuring by the ordinary ideas of our time, we cannot see what great thoughts or great developments ever came out of their brains; though out of their experience grew that helpful conception of God as the defense and the recompense of the faithful, — "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." And then, take that declaration of God to Moses in the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus. I think the conception there given, where God reveals his moral nature to Moses, at his supplication, — the majesty of it, the fullness of it, the quality of it, the proportion of it, and the drift of it, — is something more than sublime. There is nothing in the New Testament that surpasses it. The New Testament indeed may be said to be but a paraphrase of it.

Now, how can you account for the fact that there stands that magnificent conception of Jehovah, which was revealed to Moses in the beginning, — that same conception which crops out again and again in the prophets, and all the way down through the Scriptures, with more and more clearness until the time of Jesus Christ, when in him we had the full manifestation of God?

Remember that this was in a dynastic age. Remember that God gave out his life clearly in an age when

men were but little above the animals, and when the senses gave law and ethics to the world.

THE DIVINE IDEA OF DIVINITY.

And what is the conception of God which runs through the Old Testament, and all the way down? Compare it with the Grecian conception of him, and then with the Roman, which was subsequent to it. Compare it with the Assyrian notion of the Divine nature. Compare it with all the collateral ideas of God which existed. Not that there are not correct and noble points, here and there, in all mythologies and religions; but take the conceptions of Jehovah and of Jesus which we find in the New Testament, — what are they? They are not simply conceptions of power: they are essentially conceptions of *character*. And more than that, they are conceptions of character in the relations of love to mankind; and not in the relations of love alone, but in the relations of self-sacrifice as well. Long before these ideas ever appeared in philosophy or in poetry, there was lifted up in the early ages a sublime idea of God as one who carried the world in his arms, as a mother carries her child in her bosom. This idea grew stronger and stronger, until the Saviour in glory bowed his head and came down to earth, and was not ashamed to be called a man and a brother, and declared that he came not to destroy, but to save; that he came to give life, not to take life; that he came to show that greatness was service rendered, and not service accepted. He washed his disciples' feet, and said, "I, your Lord, have done this," — how? why? — "to teach you what you should

do; to teach you what is the rule of moral life and character; to teach you what is mercy; to teach you what is the nature of the Godhead; to teach you that it is not will, not power, not control, not sovereignty, but that it is *service*. The Divine idea is that of the greater serving the less; of the stronger serving the weaker; of the richer serving the poorer; of the better serving those that are less good. It is the eternal nature of God to give himself for men, that they may be lifted up out of their lowness and meagerness unto him. Now, this view is to be found regnant all through the Bible, from beginning to end; and it is to be found nowhere else, that I know of, as it is in that book. It has been hinted at in sermons and essays and all manner of tractates, but it is much more largely developed in the Word of God than it has ever been out of it. It is the slowest and last thing for men to learn.

I do not understand this to be the idea of Calvinism and Augustinianism. I hold Calvinism to teach the sovereignty of absolute will and wisdom. Every man is a Calvinist, no matter what church he belongs to, who has a great deal of will, and thinks it ought to dominate! Calvinism illustrates the monarchical idea rather than the idea of fatherhood. Men have represented God as being sovereign. It is said that he made all things, and that because he made them he has a right to do just as he pleases with them. It is claimed that, having created men, he has a right to raise up some and dash down others. When applied to the will of God as dealing with matter, I assent to this; but when applied to the Divine will as dealing

with the destinies of men, not only in time, but throughout eternity, I protest against it. I say that the God of Calvinism is not the God of Calvary. To teach that God, because he is the greatest, and has the most wisdom, and is the most powerful, has a right to rule arbitrarily, is contrary to the teaching of the Gospel. My Lord Jesus Christ, when he washed the disciples' feet, taught that he who would be most like God should be willing to do the lowest services, and to do them to the poorest and most degraded of his fellow-men. *That* is the mark of divinity! I find this nowhere so forcibly and wondrously illustrated as in the New Testament.

GREAT PREACHERS.

The Bible is the preacher's book, not only because of these things, but because in its latter stages you have the pattern preachers portrayed. Paul, for instance, I consider the greatest of preachers. He was a man who used his whole life-force in behalf of his fellows, to imbue them with the truth, and with motives for seeking a higher development and striving after salvation. He was a man who put all the resources of his genius at the disposal of those who were about him. He was unmatched in Jewish education. He had an extraordinary wealth of tenderness. Though he had great susceptibility and great pride, yet he carried himself with great humility among the discordant elements which surrounded him. Next to Christ, I like to look at this man Paul, and contemplate his character and his work. Indeed, he walked almost a Christ among men. How various were his talents! How admirable

was his employment of them! What a similarity there was between his sensibility and tenderness, and the simplicity and sweetness and gentleness and quiet majesty of Christ. Paul, being proud, was sensitive to all men's thoughts, so that, as he declared, he *died daily.* And he often refers to himself in his writings. There is not a letter of his that does not indicate his consciousness of what he suffered, or felt, or did; *Ego,* blessed *Ego,* — made blessed everywhere throughout his writings! This was the man who was willing to spend and be spent. What is more matchless than this declaration? —

"I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

This man, who knew nothing but to throw a blaze of light upon the cold and hard and selfish natures about him; this man, who came to men in the dark Roman Empire as May winds and summer breezes come to unlock the frozen soil everywhere, and to bring warmth to vegetation, — this noble man is the model of preachers; and whoever acquires his spirit has his armory full, needs no other weapons, and is complete in his equipment.

THE ESTABLISHED AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

There is one other fact in respect to the Bible, of which I desire to speak, namely, that happily it has been so long in the world, and so much taught, that it is an authority now among the common people, certainly throughout Christendom. That is an advantage which ought not to be ignored. The reverence of men for the Bible should not be undermined.

PREACHERS TO BE BIBLE-MEN.

Young gentlemen, I cannot say all that I have marked out for myself. I shall reserve some further thought on this subject for to-morrow afternoon, as to the methods by which you are to use this book. But let me say to you, that, in my judgment, all other education put together is not an equivalent for a thorough and sympathetic personal knowledge of the Bible. You ought to live in its atmosphere until it strikes utterly through and through you. No philosophical formula, no statistical tabulations, can be a substitute for its essential spirit, — that which is in it of God, and that conception which is in it of regenerated manhood or the development of spiritual life in man, and all those things which fill the apothegms, and maxims, and brief sentences of the Apostle's writings full of marrow, and make them overflow with sweetness.

Take those little words and expressions which occur in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; love never faileth." Every one of them is a flower with honey in the bottom. They are just as full of sweetness and fragrance as they can be. All the way through, every slightest word was dropped out of a honey-bearing soul.

The Word of God has not grown old, any more than

forests grow old, or the sky grows old, or the seasons grow old; and with all your gettings, get that understanding which comes from making yourselves perfectly familiar with the Bible, with its interior substance, as that which shall be a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your path, so that you shall be accustomed to look at everything in life, unconsciously, from the divine standpoint, measuring men, ways, motives, all things, from the inner spirit of the Word of God. Then the outside world and science will help you, and the Church and its ordinances will help you.

First of all things, be ye transformed into spiritual Bible-men. If you had not another volume on earth, you could make very excellent preachers of yourselves by the Word of the Lord. Allow me to speak of my own early ministry in this respect. I owe more to the Book of Acts and to the writings of the Apostle Paul than to all other books put together. I was sent into the wilderness of Indiana to preach among the poor and ignorant, and I lived much in my saddle. My library was in my saddle-bags; I went from camp-meeting to camp-meeting, and from log-hut to log-hut. I had my New Testament, and from it I learned that which has been the very secret of any success that I have had in the Christian ministry. My strength has been in the love of Christ; in the glory of that conception of God which is in Christ Jesus; in the sense that my business was to win men; and in my attempt to win them by bringing the same influences to bear upon them which I found abounding throughout the New Testament.

Blessed it would be, for many of you, if you could be shut up to the Bible in your work, if, for several years, at least during the earlier part of your ministry, you could go into the field, taking your Bible in your hand, and with it labor for men, for their conversion and for their salvation.

II.

HOW TO USE THE BIBLE.

February 12, 1874.

THE MANY-SIDEDNESS OF THE BIBLE.

IT may be said of the Bible, as it is of the alphabet: it is what you make it. Letters all have a power of their own, and they are unchangeable; but with you is the combination, and the literature which flows from the alphabet is your literature, though the alphabet represents it. We see streams setting from the Word of God, almost innumerable, of theories and doctrines; and they can hardly all be correct, because some of them are mutually destructive. And so I may say, without being misunderstood, that there are a great many Bibles. But in using the same Bible, by the same man, there are diverse modes, which make really different books of it. There are three in particular that I shall speak of this afternoon, in continuing, as I do, the discussion of the *Sources of Christian Truth and Doctrine.*

There are what may be called, then, the Bible of the closet, the Bible of the class-room, and the Bible of the pulpit. I do not mention these as being separate from each other, because they run more or less into one

another. Still less do I speak of them as being antagonistic, because they all have, or may have, an auxiliary relationship to each other; so that the most perfect use of sacred Scripture will be that which combines the three.

THE BIBLE OF THE CLOSET.

First, the *Bible of the closet*. It has this peculiarity, that its function is to give sustenance, light, direction, inspiration, and consolation to the person who makes application to it. It is the word of God, as studied by any one for his personal benefit, not seeking to know his relation to others, except so far as his duties are concerned; not seeking to know the system of the universe; not looking for philosophies, nor for ideas, except so far as philosophies or ideas have immediate reference to his own personal life. It is the personal Bible, the private man's Bible; and as such it is to be studied in the spirit in which the Apostle spoke when he said: —

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Now, no two men are just alike; no two men have precisely the same difficulties; no two men have precisely the same needs. Put twenty men at the goodly table of the New Haven House, and you shall find scarcely two of them selecting their food alike; watch their amount of sleep, and you shall scarcely find any two of them that agree exactly in that particular; and the same will be true in respect to other experiences

where temperament, habit, necessity, business, and various other elements come in; and as this is in evident accordance with natural law, you think it is wholesome.

Men read the Word of God on the principle of elective affinity, and there are many who go trumpeting and triumphing all the way through it, because they always see things *couleur de rose.* They are of a buoyant, imaginative temperament; they fish for that in the Bible which feeds them, that they like to read; and they go skipping and jumping along on the salient points of joy, and leave out the interstitial spaces of darkness. And if you could mark what for twenty years has sustained them, you would find that it is not the whole of the book, nor that part of the book which some other man took, but something that was personal to themselves, and that came to them on account of certain wants and tastes.

Then, if you take another person who is naturally timid, who is melancholy, who is overwhelmed in life with disappointments, you will find that he, going to the Word of God, is perpetually comforting himself with the consolations which he finds in it. He acts also on the principle of elective affinity. Because he likes consolation, he therefore seeks it everywhere. Because he needs comfort, he, as it were, works it out of the Word of God, looking at different parts of Scripture always or generally from the same point of view.

I suspect that there is not a single one of you who is in the ministry, and who has preached on any subject involving human wants, who has not had some persons in his congregation that said, "I hope he will shape that sermon so as to suit my case"; but, instead of that,

the preacher went on with his "first," and "secondly," and "thirdly," through his entire discourse, and they went out, saying, "Well, I suppose that was a good sermon. I hoped it would come down to where I am, and meet my need, but it did not." They wanted consolation; but they got an intellectual disquisition on something which wonderfully helped somebody else in the congregation, but did not feed them.

READING FOR PERSONAL NEED.

Therefore, of the scores of people who go to the Word of God, each, if he goes honestly and earnestly, seeks to feed himself; and what food he wants depends very much on the way in which he is made, on the exigencies in which he stands, and on the experiences that have developed some parts of his moral nature and left some parts of it uneducated and unformed. There are ten thousand human wants, and no one man can prescribe for them all. It would require omniscience to do that. But the Word of God meets them, and must interpret itself to people according to their various needs. When persons are made willing by the Spirit of God, by the Spirit of the Invisible, they will find, both in and out of the Bible, green pastures and still waters for themselves.

So I may say that the Word of God is like the circumjacent country. One goes out from your classes, and scales East or West Rock. He studies its structure. He explores the whole country to make himself familiar with its geological formation. And when he returns, he gives an account of that part of nature in which he is particularly interested. Another goes out and comes

back without having seen a stone, — unless he has stubbed his toe against one. He has been studying the botany of the country. He loves that. Another does not care for either of these departments as a realm of scientific facts; for he has a poet's eye, and would sing, if he could, the things that he sees. He sees them in suggestions. Behind every plant, there is to his eye a more beautiful one. Above everything that he beholds there is something rarer than the thing itself. The artist follows the poet, and is not greatly different from him; but he is kept near to the earth by the necessity of representation. He sees things in a still different light. He studies their combinations, their gradations of color, and their minute parts. He is thinking all the time, "How could that be portrayed? How could this be worked up? How could I sketch that?"

All of them have seen nature; but nature is not different because they bring back different reports concerning it.

Now, through the glades, in the forests, over the mountains, along the valleys, and upon the plains of Sacred Writ, men go, and follow the leading of their want. Blessed be God, they have that liberty. And the same man will seek different things according to his varying moods or needs. Men seek sometimes the things that open toward the other life, and sometimes the things that interpret the lowest experiences of this life. So there is always this personal Bible, — a Bible that is vastly neglected. Men think that they read their Bibles when they do not. There are many who have a superstitious reverence for it, and go to it periodically, and skim over portions of it; but they do not read it.

BONDAGE AND LIBERTY IN READING.

A man starts for his business, and gets as far as the door; and his wife calls out to him, "My dear, have you forgotten prayers?" "Well," he says, "we have n't had prayers, have we? I did forget." Back he goes, and takes his Bible, and turns to the twelfth Psalm. He chooses that because it is short. Blessed be the Psalms; they are of all lengths and shapes, to meet every emergency! Having hastily gone through a perfunctory service, he starts for his business again, saying, "The Devil did n't catch me to-day; I have read my Bible."

Now, how does that differ from putting an amulet around a man's neck, or from worshiping an idol? You might as well look into a cook-shop window and think you are fed, as to go to your Bible in that way and think that it is of any use to you. You have *abused* it, not used it.

I lay great stress on this liberty which belongs to men, this necessity which is laid upon them, to find that in the Word of God which shall meet their case, and read it according to their personal wants. There are those who learn the Bible; there are thousands of humble people to whom it becomes familiar; for it is a peculiarity of the Word of God, that as men run under trees and get behind rocks when storms are in the sky, though otherwise they would not, so we seek a covert in the Bible when we are in trouble, as we would not at any other time.

God's Word is not a house of bondage. It is not required that a man shall every morning marshal his

family, and call the roll, and grind out a ritualistic or regulation prayer, and read his Bible. God's Word is a Father's house, into which you have a right to go, and speak or keep silent. You are children of God, and this provision has been made for you; but it is not to be enforced upon you, as though you were slaves. You are to avail yourselves of it according to your need. You are free in this matter.

I suppose no person ever did or ever will read the whole Bible in his life. I know there are persons who read it by letter; I hear people say that they make it a rule to read the whole Bible once a year; and I have no doubt that they skate over it once a year; but I do not think they do more than that, because it is not all for them.

Take, for instance, a great, square-built, good, honest-minded, practical Yankee, who knows the quality of matter, and who knows how to put thing and thing together, and make money out of them, — take such a man and put him into Solomon's Songs, and see what he will make out of them.

Take now an Oriental, a man who was born under different skies; who is of a different stock; whose ancestors have had different associations from generation to generation; whose mind-methods are different; whose growth is more by the imagination and less by the practical reason, — take such a man, and he will say of the Songs of Solomon, "That is the buckle of the Bible. It is that which clasps and holds together all the other books."

And so, all the way through the Bible, there are things which men who are proud, or men who are

constitutionally without wisdom, cannot understand, — they are mysteries to them. There are deep things for mystics in the Bible which people who have no mysticism are unable to see. They do not see them when they look at them. In the Bible there are things for the twilight, things for the moonlight, things for the midnight, things for the day-dawn, and things for the noontide. The Bible is filled with ineffable riches for men; and it belongs to every man to select according to his need.

The different parts of the Bible are of very different values for private reading. I think there is a great deal of the Bible that is just as necessary for the race as the spelling-book; but how long is it since you sat down to read your spelling-books? You are done with them; and yet you do not disparage them, nor cry them to naught.

THE DECALOGUE.

Take the Ten Commandments. It is true that by a very liberal construction you can make them cover about everything in creation, as, by beating gold with gold-beaters' skin you can make a piece as big as my hand cover an acre or so. The Ten Commandments stand where men emerge from the lowest conditions, and in the dawn of the recognition of God's authority. They have to do with the commonest vices of men, and with their plainest duties in society. They are the charter that imposes conditions without which there could not be rectitude, or the proprieties of life, or the sanctities of the household. But they are all negative. All that which is called in the New Testament "the

fruit of the Spirit," is left out of them. Of the glow of interior illumination there is not a ray in them. Far back they stand in the beginning of the history of the world, and far down in that history which reproduces itself in every generation. They are adapted to the building up of a lower style of man. Their cry, forever, is, "Thou shalt not," "Thou shalt not." Woe to that man who has lived among churches and Bibles and preachers, and has not got higher than the Ten Commandments! And yet we see them emblazoned in the House of God as though they expressed the highest ideas to which men have reached. They say to men, "Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not commit adultery"; the grosser and more bestial forms of sin are forbidden by them; but those moral virtues and spiritual attainments which belong to a developed manhood are not enjoined in them. I do not say that it would not do very well for men who are pretty high up in civilization to read them yet; there are many men that are called civilized who I think would profit still by reading them in respect to some of those vices which they condemn. But they are an illustration of what I mean. In my estimation, the Ten Commandments are not to be compared with the Sermon on the Mount, which is sometimes supposed to be the highest peak in the New Testament. No, it is not, by a great deal. The fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John — those incomparable discourses of Christ in the love-hours which just preceded his crucifixion — are as much higher than the Sermon on the Mount as that is higher than the Ten Commandments.

There are, then, variations in the moral value of different parts of the Bible, if men only have the interpreting necessity in them by which to discern these things.

Such is what I call *the Bible of the closet*. It is interpreted by personal necessity, and by elective affinity; but that is not all. It is an immediate source of consolation. It comforts in sorrow; it relieves in perplexity; it is a mother in the household; it is a counselor to the mechanic, to the workman, when he asks, "Where shall I go? What shall I do? How shall I carry myself?" When men are stirred up; when they are oppressed; when they are burdened; when they are yoked, harnessed, and driven by depressing moods, then they, above all other men, must have a personal Bible speaking to them, day by day. Under such circumstances the Bible becomes, not only a lamp to their feet and a light to their path, but bread for their life, medicine for their soul, and water coming to them from under the very throne of God itself.

THE CLASS-ROOM BIBLE.

Next, we have *the Bible of the class-room*. This is the Bible philosophized and interpreted according to some system. It is indispensable that there should be a Bible of the class-room. The Word of God is so large; it touches human nature on so many sides; there is so much in it of duty and of destiny hereafter; it is so composite and so variable; parts of it are so apparently antagonistic with each other until a comprehensive view is gained of it, as a record that has come down through thousands of revolving years, among different

peoples and in different languages; there is so much in it that requires explanation and rearrangement, that when we undertake to look at it as a whole, it is necessary that there should be a Bible of the class-room, in which the various teachings shall be digested and accounted for.

First come those indispensable men, the philologer and the archæologist. These two men simply take the Bible and put it into your hands with such illustration as is essential to a knowledge of the text.

THE VALUE OF THEOLOGY.

Then comes the theologian proper. Now, young gentlemen, I have often indulged myself in words that would seem to undervalue theologians; but you know I do not mean it! I profess to be a theologian myself; my father was a theologian; my brothers are all theologians; and so are many men whom I revere, and who are the brightest lights of genius, I think, that have ever shone in the world. I believe in theologians; and yet I think it is perfectly fair to make game of them! I do not think there is anything in this world, whether it be man or that which is beneath man, that is not legitimate food for innocent, unvicious fun; and if it should cast a ray of light on the truth, and alleviate the tediousness of a lecture now and then to have a slant at theologians, why, I think they can stand it! It will not hurt them, and it may amuse us. So let me speak freely, — the more so, because I affirm that it is indispensable for every man who is to do a considerable religious work during a long period, or with any degree of self-consistency, to be a theologian. He must

have method; there must be a sequence of ideas in his thought. And if the work runs long enough and far enough, and embraces many things, there must be a system of applying means to ends, there must be a knowledge of instruments. These things are theology, in a sense, — a part of it, at any rate.

Indeed, philosophizing follows of necessity after culture. It is one of the fruits of intelligence. To merely know facts is to be no higher than an animal. When you begin to know the relations of facts you begin to ascend. When you know facts and their relations in a large department, you become a philosopher of that department.

Theologian, then, is only another name for *philosopher*. The theologian's department is the philosophy of moral ideas and their connections with mankind.

Not only so, but a good understanding of Scripture itself demands that there should be interpretations given of it. The work is made more accessible and plainer by theology, in spite of all its evils of method. And in the main let me say that, while I do not believe in a great many of the theological methods and systems which have prevailed, I do not despise them. I do not speak of them with contempt, any more than I do of certain civil governments, which certain nations or certain times demanded, but which do not fit our times nor our nation; or, any more than I do of the schools of Alexandria, which did not compare with Yale or Harvard, but which were admirable in their age, and which, by their very excellences, stimulated growth, the old institutions being no longer applicable to the new conditions which were produced by them.

As summer makes the tree so much larger that the bark has to let out a seam, because the old bark will not do for the new growth, and as the same thing takes places from season to season, so mental philosophy — for all theology is mental philosophy — changes from age to age, through both obvious and latent causes.

EXCELLENCES AND DEFECTS OF CALVINISM.

Look, for instance, at the view of the Divine economy which was represented, in an iron age, by John Calvin, — a man without bowels and intensely in sympathy with the monarchic idea. That view has been assailed a thousand times more severely in the invisible process by which democratic ideas have gone through the mass of men, than ever it has been by those who have spoken and written against it. Men have come to have an entirely different notion of the rights of the citizen ; and political affairs have changed in men's estimation ; and those dynastic views and ideas of the Divine Being which once prevailed would be absolutely impossible to men in our day, except such as are in sympathy with the special faculties of self-esteem, firmness, and conscientiousness, which suit the ruler-mind and the ruler-nature. But in general it is to be said that all the systems of theology which have prevailed in the world have done a great work.

I may speak in your hearing, sometimes, slightingly of John Calvin. He knows as well as I do that I do not mean any harm to him. I revere him, and appreciate his great work. The world is greatly indebted to him. When the whole of Christendom was broken

off from sensuous and visible objects of adoration, and they felt that they had lost everything; when, having been trained to believe that religion presented to them bodily, in church forms, all that they needed in their worship, they were called to suddenly step out of these forms, they said, "Why, we have lost everything; there is nothing left." Before, there were days, and calendar, and saints, and priests, and garments, and cathedrals, and all the panoply that was required for a believer in material things, but now they were gone. When it was said to them, "Abandon your symbols and ceremonies and services," and they were like the men who, having eaten garlics and onions in Egypt, found themselves eating nothing on the other side of the Red Sea, then John Calvin filled their imagination, and gave them just as much to believe as they could hold, and a little more.

The transition was a magnificent one. It was a grand era. As a mental phenomenon it is not half enough pondered. He substituted for that which had been taken away from them, or which they had given up, a system of such intellectual power and such elements for admiration and adhesion, that it was well adapted to the irregular times in which he reared it. So it did a wonderful work, besides being an ark in which to carry men over from papacy to the better ground of Protestantism. I like old John Calvin, because I think he believed what he preached, — though I cannot say so of hundreds of later men; they are not large enough for the space they occupy. If David had gone forth in Saul's armor, his voice might have sounded out from it on this side, or on that; he might have

rattled about in it after a fashion; but he would not have felt at home in it. Men go into a system of theology which is as much larger than they are as a lobster is larger than a snail; and they pipe through it, and make a little noise, and this is all! I do not accuse them of insincerity; but I say that the system they use is not adapted to them. John Calvin's system, however, fitted *him* all over, and I think he really enjoyed it, — there are evidences that he did; and its work since that time has been wonderful. It has done both good and evil. It has raised up many sturdy and stalwart Christian men. But it has also crushed many and many a heart. It has wrung sorrows and sadnesses out of sensitive natures such as none but the recording angel knows. It has turned many days to darkness; and much of the light of God which came free as the air has been intercepted by it; and when it fell upon the understandings of men, its color was some lurid red or some hideous blue. That I know right well, both in my own experience and in the experience of those whose troubles I have been called to medicate in hundreds and hundreds of instances.

So, while I regard Calvin as one of the master minds of the ages; while I believe that some part of the truth which belonged to his system was never before so ably stated as he stated it; while I think that his statement of it can never be improved, — yet I say that in many respects, so far as that is concerned which should be the supreme idea of any system, namely, *the nature and administration of the Divine,* I do not think it is Christian. I think it is essentially what the religion of

nature was, before nature knew that there was a Saviour. It is monarchic and hard, in my judgment.

Well, all this that I have been saying about theology and theologians is apologetic and explanatory. I would set myself right with you. I say, therefore, that I admire theologians, and that I thoroughly believe in theology, though I claim the right to criticise both, and to express my like or dislike, according to the measure of reason and feeling which God has given me.

WHAT THE BIBLE IS NOT.

Now, then, let me speak of the way in which the Bible comes into the class-room, and becomes the foundation of a system.

Generally, almost invariably, the theologian comes to the Bible (in times gone by he did, at any rate) with the general impression that it contains all that is necessary for a man to know in respect to the Divine Being; that it is relatively a perfect exposition of the nature of God. The Bible does not make any such claim, but the theologian goes to the class-room, Bible in hand, with the assumption that there is in the Word of God all that is needed for the development of a system of universal moral government; that it does not confine itself to substantial facts and general outlines, but that it runs down deep into minutiæ, and far back into the eternities, even; that everything essential to the belief of a Christian man is contained there in so many words, or by such immediate inference as to be unavoidable and certain; that directly, or by indispensable conclusion, the frame of the Church,

its polity, its offices, its government, its work, and its whole administration, either are delivered, or are to be delivered, to the hands of men, by provision which has been made in the Word of God. All these assumptions are made on the supposition that the Word of God is a perfect man of counsel, and is adequate to all the emergencies of the world. Now, I do not believe in any one of those points. I do not believe that the Bible contains all that it is necessary for a man to know of God. It was not designed that it should. Do you suppose that the Bible was meant to be a substitute for the revelation of the Holy Ghost? Do you suppose that there is anything in the Bible which can teach men as I was taught, when almost every earthly sensation was paralyzed, and I stood by my dead first-born? In the utter abandonment of my soul, I opened my heart to God, and his Spirit came down and taught me a lesson of his fatherhood that I found neither in Genesis, nor in Exodus, nor in Leviticus, nor in the Prophets, nor in any of the books of the Bible. It was first disclosed to me by the Holy Ghost; and then I went back to the Word of God. Though I did not see the thing itself, I saw its germ there; and I did not know how to interpret it until I received light from the Divine Spirit.

Do you not suppose that God means man to work out his own knowledge of the Bible, and of the truths that are in it, as well as to work out his own salvation? Do you suppose the Bible is a substitute for human findings-out? Do you suppose that it contains everything that is to be known? Do you suppose that it is a thesaurus, an encyclopedia of knowledge, meeting

universal necessity? Do you suppose that as a fountain of instruction it is all in all? Certainly it is not. The unfolding ages continually add to our knowledge of things, never taking us away from the germs, any more than literature takes us away from the alphabet, or any more than the highest mathematics take us away from the numerals, which, disappearing, reappear again in the highest functions and uses.

The man who has found himself out by experience, who has brought in the largest harvests from life, who has pressed from the grape the pure wine, who has made of wheat the best flour, — he feels, more than any other, how rich the Bible is. He goes out of the Bible to find things that he does not find in it or that he finds there in germinal forms, rude tendencies, which it was designed that man should work out. The Bible was meant to start him, but it was intended that he should go on to perfection.

So, then, without time and development, in other words, without the ordinary building process which the Divine Providence is carrying on through all the ages of the world; without that revelation of knowledge which God is bringing forth from the earth beneath us, from the starry depths above us, from past generations of men, from nature, from governments, from climates, from industries, and from emergencies that have swelled the conceptions of humanity in every age, — without all these elements, the Bible itself is not perfect. For the Bible was not meant to be like a tree standing alone. Neither was it meant to be like a solitary cave, with some oracle speaking from the wilderness. It is part and parcel of human life; of

providence; of the great process of unity under the Divine administration. It goes with man, giving and taking alike; giving more and receiving more; forever augmenting; never so poor as in the beginning, and never so rich as in the later periods of the world.

ERRORS OF INTERPRETATION.

In interpreting the Bible, men are liable — I say by way of criticism — to error in carrying back modern ideas to old words in the Bible, so that final fruits are made to stand in the very beginnings of time. They convert the whole liberty of emotion and imagination into ideas; and to things that are of themselves evanescent and transitory they give fixity. In other words, I complain that a book so generously and carelessly written, now with the unlimited freedom of prophetic inspiration, now with poetry, and now with sentiment, is so often ground over, and that it comes out of the mill in the form of absolute scientific statistics. The personal element is construed into the universal. That which is said of one man, and of him in particular emergencies, in the Bible, is translated as something which belongs to human nature. That which is said to be true in one age is supposed to be a generic statement of that which is true in every age. That which is true of a man in one stage of his development is supposed to be true of him in every stage of his development.

In this way, men, forming their systems of theology out of the Bible, bring to it methods which it cannot bear; which mar it rather than clear it up; which spoil it rather than help it.

All this is a criticism of their method. It is a criti-

cism, not of their attempt to draw out a generic view and statement of the Bible, but of their attempt to do it by imperfect, and sometimes by very wrong methods.

DANGERS OF THE RIGHT METHOD.

Then, again, they bring the right principle to work in the wrong way, which results in a fatal error; the principle, namely, that the Bible must be interpreted, not from the letter altogether, nor at all, but from the thing that the letter speaks of. If I were to state it in terms that many would regard as audacious, I should say that the interpretation of the Bible is not in itself, but outside of itself. This may seem to be a bold statement, but it is not. You all believe it. You know perfectly well that it is true in regard to physical things. A child in the Sunday school knows that when the Bible says "stone" there is nothing in the letters that spell that word which tells you what stone is. But if, seeing the word in the Bible you go and look at the thing itself, then you can return to the Bible, and say, "I know what stone is." If the Bible speaks of rivers, of mountains, of trees, of lambs, of calves, of lions, of peacocks, of gold, of silver, or of anything that is material, nobody supposes that one can understand what these things are until he has seen them outside of the Bible.

Now the same thing is true in respect to social elements. If the Bible speaks of husband and wife, or of brother and sister, we know no more about them than we do about cherubim and seraphim, unless we know what brother and sister and husband and wife were before we go to the Bible. We take that which is

outside of the Bible and use it as a means of interpreting statements which are made inside of it.

So, in all the relations of life, where the Bible speaks of love, and sparing, and pitying, and helping, and hoping, and all elements of this class, we gain a knowledge of them from the exterior, and then carry that knowledge to the interior, of the book.

That which is true, and which is admitted to be true, in respect to physical and social elements, is likewise true of all forms of government. Nothing in the Bible would teach us what a king was, if we had not learned it outside of the Bible. Laws, constitutions, modes of public procedure, — the knowledge of these things cannot be conveyed by the letter alone. Nations, towns, cities, villages, — when these things are spoken of in Scripture, we first go to the things themselves, and then we bring back to the letter, to throw light upon its interpretation, the knowledge that we have gained.

The same is true in respect to mental philosophy, or that which relates to things that are beyond the reach of our sense, — things that transcend our powers of investigation, — things that pertain to the invisible world. The nearest that we can come to these is to take the analogies which approach most nearly to them, and then, for the rest, depend upon the imagination. Thus we shape them as well as we can. We never can know perfectly things which are not within the reach of our comprehension by one or other of the faculties of the mind.

The Scriptures address themselves to our power of apprehension. We have means of understanding by which to obtain that knowledge toward which they

point; and, having obtained it, we go back to the statements which they make.

Now, to be safe in the formation of a theory or doctrine from the Bible, men should not only recognize this fact, but they should guard against its abuse, — for it may be abused. It is open to very serious objections and liabilities. It is like a road along the edge of a fathomless gulf, and therefore it ought to be carefully guarded. Men should be taught to use their liberty in interpretation; but men have used that liberty, and denied that they used it. They have brought to the interpretation of God their foregoing knowledge, their special political biases, their overt or latent notions of mental philosophy, their views of the divine moral nature, their ideas of the way in which God has constructed each man's personality; and these things have all, unconsciously to them, gone into the construction of their theologies. Thus they have used great liberty of interpretation, and they ought to have used it; but it would have been better if they had used it with their eyes open, with larger method, and with proper rules for the correction of personal error, and what not.

HUMAN REASON TO INTERPRET DIVINE THINGS.

But if men do it avowedly, a great outcry is made against it. If, for instance, I should say, in the pulpit of Plymouth Church, that the human reason should sit in judgment on divine things, and if it should be reported in the papers the next day, thrice a thousand good men would hold up their hands with horror, and exclaim, "Where will that fellow stop?" And yet, if you must not bring human reason to divine mysteries,

I should like to know how you are going to bring divine mysteries to human reason, — and if they are not brought there, they are nothing to you; or, under such circumstances, they do not exist so far as you are concerned. Just as though the Word of God did not appeal to reason in the most profound things. "Come, now, and let us reason together," saith the Lord. Thus men are laid under obligation to use their reason. The human reason, as God made it, and adapted it to the purposes of considering everything that concerns our welfare on earth, — wherefore should it not be carried up and brought to bear upon those things which relate to our eternal welfare? May we not reasonably say that the human reason must be employed, directly, in our judgment of divine truths, so far as they are brought to us? It is safer to say that than to deny it. You are to take care and not fall into the imperfections to which the human reason may lead; you are to guard against the liabilities to error which accompany its use; but you are not to deny the necessity of using it. Those imperfections and liabilities may be allowed for, may be accounted for, but the loss which would result from not using it cannot be made up. And if you use it for the consideration of divine themes, saying to yourself all the time that you do not use it, you have all the mischiefs to which the use of it renders you liable, and you have them in reduplicated forms.

If, then, you say that we must not mix philosophy with pure heavenly intelligence as it is revealed in the Word of God, I say that no man does read the Word of God without bringing his philosophy to it.

Thus you will make life and fact an interpreter.

Thus you will keep Bible-truth down close to human consciousness. It is not by bringing into the class-room reason, experience, those things which belong to the great community, and making them instruments for interpreting the Bible, that we change the proportions and the emphasis of truth; it is by such a use of the Bible in the class-room as makes it a subject of dry philosophy, unleavened in its form and structure by the recognized human element which it unsuccessfully attempts to shut out, that we are likely to do it violence.

But no man ought to suppose that by his reason, or by the collective reason of mankind, will ever be brought out and rendered plain the full of all that belongs to the germinal statements of Scripture. I take a single element, — "God is love." Now, I say that when you take that text and announce it, you are like a man who puts his foot on a ship, and starts out on the Atlantic Ocean, with the determination that he will know the depth at every point, and every curve of the shore, around and around the globe. He has work for a life before him. Consider any form of love that you ever knew. Where is there in a word anything that can represent the inflammation, the fruitfulness, the fire, of that feeling, shooting every whither, like an auroral light by night, or like the sunlight by day? Who can express it by a word, or any number of words? Sing your sonnet, make your poem, write your descriptive letter; but after all, the pure loving heart, that has had the dream of love all night and the vision of it all day, has had more experience of it than the whole of human language can ever put together.

The thing transcends all bounds of expression, and is immensely larger than any words can make it, even on earth and among men; and oh! what must it be when you raise it to the proportions and the power of the Infinite, — when it is not simply love as conceived of in the fallible human soul, but when it is love as it exists in the Divine nature? The qualities of divinity reach so high, they are so far beyond the power of our feeble minds to conceive, they are so vast, and they penetrate so deep into the recesses of infinity, that when we contemplate them, we say, as Paul said after his most rapturous life and most glorious experience, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

RELATIVE VALUE OF BIBLE DOCTRINES.

A great many doctrines that are contained in the Bible, and that are supposed to be of the most transcendent importance, men regard as important only on account of their structural relation to the systems of which they are a part. There are a great many things in the Bible which, in and of themselves, are regarded as of very little consequence, but which in their connection with other things are considered of very great moment. For instance, the Apostle sets forth how to make a man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good work. There are those who take exception to his teaching on that subject, and treat it as of little or no account; but the theologian says, "If you do not hold that, what becomes of this, that, or the other point in your system? There will be a screw loose

when that is left out." And so men hold one or another doctrine because they think it is important to the cohesion and efficient working of the different portions of their system. This axle is connected with that wheel out yonder, and that wheel carries another wheel, and that another; and the action of every part depends upon the action of every other part; and so it is deemed indispensable that every part should be kept intact: and men's theological reasonings are carried on accordingly. Doctrines are largely valued with reference to their connections with other doctrines. The result is that systems of theology become more important in men's estimation than the Bible itself, and more important than the souls of men for whose benefit it was given to the world. A great many men preach "for the sake of the truth, the TRUTH," they will tell you; whereas, I supposed that men preached for the salvation of their fellow-men. "You must not give up God's truth," they say, when you puzzle them. When you say to them, "What is the use of such a view? what fruit comes of it? what good does it do?" and they are perplexed, they say, "Ah! it is taught, and it must be maintained." And then there is a roll-call, and those texts are trotted out which are supposed to teach that view. Men are afraid that if they give up this or that truth of dogma, the foundation will be taken out from under their system, and they will have nothing to stand on. So, as men do not agree in all the doctrines which should constitute a true theological system, we have Arminianism, and Pelagianism, and Semi-Pelagianism, and Demi-semi-Pelagianism. Men are divided in reference to the various doctrines of

religion, some denying those that are held by others, and some giving more emphasis to certain ones than others do, where they are held in common; and they lose sight of the fact that the value of God's truth consists in its power of carrying salvation to men. Paul, you remember, said, "I determined not to know anything among you save [he ought to have said the *Old Testament Scriptures*, but he did not] Jesus Christ." No, that was not what he said: he said, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, — and *him crucified!*" What a horror it was to those who held the Greek idea of God to be told that he should be susceptible of crucifixion! and what a horror it was to those in whom the Jewish prejudices were strong, to be told that their Messiah could be whelmed in disgrace, could be put to death, and could be inclosed in a sepulcher! And yet Paul would not equivocate to them, and he said, "I did not come to preach to you old ceremonials or old laws, however good; I came to present Christ to you in the most offensive way that he can be presented." That was the best way in which he could lift them out of their mere physical idea of God, and therefore he would not abandon it.

SELECTION OF DOCTRINE FOR PREACHING.

This change of emphasis and proportion in truth opens a very wide field for investigation, and perhaps it better becomes an essay than a lecture; so I will only announce it, and say that in your career in the seminary it is worth your while to learn all the doctrines of the Bible as they are related to theological systems; but that when you come to preach you will certainly

very soon sift what you know, or what you think you know; and you will find that one and another thing which never seemed of much importance in the lecture-room are beginning to be very important in your regard. In other words, if you are true men, and if you go out into the world to preach, with the idea that Christianity is the work of creating divine manhood among men, that it is the work of bringing the power of God to bear, through the truth, upon human nature, then, in spite of yourself, you will take the things which strike the most directly at men's interior natures, and obliterate their prejudices, and draw forth their sympathies, and bring them higher and higher toward God, along new lines of interpretation and measurement and criticism. There will be this or that doctrine that you deemed of very great importance, and that you thought you would preach about, but that somehow or other you do not get a chance to take up.

You will find old men who will say to you, "Sir, you should give to every man his portion in due season." Yes, you should; but it does not follow that you should give to every man something of everything as being his portion. Every mother gives to her child its milk in due season, as its portion; but she does not give roast beef to the babe on her bosom. Every physician gives to each patient under his care his portion of medicine in due season, but he does not give to all his patients the same medicine. He may not give in one family, as long as he lives, that which he is continually giving in another family. One disease requires one sort of treatment, and another disease another sort. Sometimes

astringents are necessary, and sometimes emollients. Here stimulants are needful, and there sedatives. The kinds of medicine which shall be given are determined by the condition of the patient.

Now, it is said, "You must give men the whole system of God's moral government in the universe"; but I say that it is not all in the Bible. It is not discovered yet. Some of the elements of it are there, but not all of them. The whole system of God's moral government has not been disclosed. It may be thought presumptuous to say so, but it is true. And I say, further, that it is not the rule of the Bible to undertake to disclose the whole of the royalty of the Divine government, or of the Divine nature. You cannot find out these things to perfection.

What, then, are you to do? You are to use the truth of God as you would use materials for erecting a building, not all at once, but in their proper order. The growth of manhood is not instantaneous, but gradual. The developing of a man in holy faith is a work into which enter the elements of selection, proportion, emphasis, and frequency.

THE PREACHER'S BIBLE.

This would naturally lead me to speak, though I need not, of the preacher's Bible, which is really the combination of the other two. The Bible of the preacher may be, and ought to be, the Bible of the class-room, but it must be especially a personal, private Bible. No man is fit to preach who has not felt his own need of the Bible, or of the truths that are in it. No man is fit to preach whose garments do not smell

of the fire of agony. Spurzheim said, "No woman is fit to be married who has not seen great affliction." That is the intensive form in which he expressed his judgment as to the benefits of the ripening influence of sorrow.

A young man who goes out to preach is never ordained when the consecrating hand has been laid on his head, and he has entered upon the ministry. The ceremony of ordination is very well as far as it goes: but not until the providence of God has put its hand upon you; not until you have ached and wept and prayed in secret places; not until you have realized your weakness and unworthiness, and said, "Would God that I were dead"; not until you have felt that your appareling is as nothing; not until with unutterable desire you have turned to God with the meekness and humility and gentleness and sweetness of a child, and been conscious that you were carried in the arms of his love, — not until then will you be fully ordained. But when you have had this administration, how blessed the Word of God will be to you! It may be that you will not want to read some parts of it; the mother does not sing everything that there is in the music-book; she sings those tunes which are sweetest to her children and to herself; and so you will read those portions of the Bible which are appropriate to your need. You will each get from that beautiful tree, the Word of God, such fruit as you require for your consolation and encouragement in life, and for your up-building in righteousness.

You will have your private Bible from which you will derive light and food and comfort according to circumstances; then you will have your Bible of the

class-room, by the aid of which you will attempt to bring under one comprehensive arrangement of successional development the principal ideas which pertain to God and his relations to mankind, — always understanding that "we see through a glass, darkly"; and at last you will come to the preacher's Bible itself, with all its vast resources, from which you will take truths that are good for your own soul and for other men's souls, that you may bring them, with all the vigor and unction and emotion which comes from your personal participation in them, home to the salvation of men. When you have the preacher's Bible, you have that which is like a living power, and you are a trumpet, and the life of God is behind you, so that the words which come from you are breathed by him.

III.

THE TRUE METHOD OF PRESENTING GOD.

February 18, 1874.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

WE often lose the importance of the sayings of the New Testament by familiarity with them. I am sure no man can adequately understand (so great is it) the declaration of our Saviour, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Although no familiarity can quite stale that, yet, having heard it from our childhood, and slid over it unthinkingly, we may not see it opening itself up in such a way as to show all the avenues of meaning which are really in it.

In the first place, it is very remarkable how intense is the homage, and indeed what is the kind of homage, which is required. It is not obedience simply; it is not awe; it is not admiration; it is *love*, — the deepest, the strongest, the most comprehensive of all human experiences. Nor is it merely a love which acts mildly. The cumulation of phrase upon phrase, which we find employed in that command, shows the weakness of language, and the strength of the thing to be expressed.

It is a love that is to be made up of all that there is in man.

And this is not all; we are to consider that this love is to be expressed not toward our father, not toward our mother, not toward our natural kindred; that it is not to run out through the open avenues of friendship; but that it is to be directed toward a great invisible Being, whom the eye never saw, whom the ear never heard, whom the hand never grasped. That invisible presence named "God" is to be the object of the strongest affection of which the human mind is capable. Now, when we think how hard it is for men to adapt themselves to duties that are visible, or to yield to influences that carry with them collateral motives and incitements, we may well suppose that it would be hard for them to make an invisible Presence, who does not address himself to us through any of the ordinary channels of the human mind, the object of such overpowering affection as this.

There is another consideration. Not only is this the command of God in the incarnated Christ Jesus, but we are to add his declaration that around about it cling the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. When unfolded they surround this great Center. Such was their meaning, as they were interpreted in the ancient day. All the prophets and early writers and lawgivers of the Hebrews meant but this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself," — the two great divisions of the command.

THE OBJECTS OF PREACHING.

Now, if this is the great central idea, then the preaching of *God* is the foundation of all pulpit instruction and of all true systems of religion, and in preaching this you will strike the central source of power. If, therefore, a man is to preach well, it is not enough for him to preach duties and relations; it is not enough for him to preach the analysis of human thought and feeling; it is not enough for him to preach all the inflections of experience in human life: there must be such a development of the Divine as shall make itself the center of the preacher's power.

And take note that, in developing the character of God, it is not enough for you to unfold a character that is strong, and just, and wise. You must so present the idea of God as to make men love him. And although you may plead that the carnal man has no aptitude by nature for the comprehension of divine things; though you may plead that there are traits, attributes, qualities, in the Divine nature, and features in the Divine government, which will naturally repel selfishness and pride in man (all of which is true, — more true than we can imagine), nevertheless, the Divine character is altogether lovely; and there are corresponding traits in man which stand over against every one of its great elements. It *is* in the power of man to come into sympathy with them. There are adaptations in him which, when quickened by the effluent Spirit of God, draw him toward that Spirit. There are in the human mind predispositions and powers which adapt it to an experience of the feeling of love to God. That

men do not often use these, and that they cannot easily use them, does not touch the question; for, under the influence of the Divine Spirit which goes with your work of preaching, there *is* that in man which enables him to see and to love what is lovely in God.

Preaching, then, has a twofold object: namely, to develop the character of God so as, first, to make men see how unlovely is the manner of their own life; and then to attract them and inspire them with aspiration toward the loveliness of the Divine. And I shall speak to you this afternoon especially on the subject of preaching God, or, more explicitly, on the subject of the true mode of presenting the nature of God to men so that they may understand it and love it.

MEN'S IDEAS OF GOD: THE TRUE LOVERS.

When you go into your respective parishes, it will not do for you to take your own class-feeling along with you. It will not do for you to take it for granted, unthinkingly, that everybody has about your state of mind in regard to God. It becomes a part of your duty, if you are a wise pastor, to investigate and find out just what is the condition of those among whom you are to labor. I think your experience will be about this, in ordinary parishes: you will find, first, a rare few who love with a love which really overmasters every other feeling, — which, like sunlight, shines down and gives color to every other affection, surrounding all, penetrating all, mounting higher than all, and making itself the center of life, — natures that have this true appreciation of God, bear it about with them day and night, and can say, "Lord, whom have I

in heaven but thee? and who is there on earth that I desire in comparison with thee?"

There are persons whose thought of God is perpetual music to them. In the morning, at noontide, and in the evening, they are still with God. Their thoughts rise as naturally to him as vapors rise to the drawing of the sun. The number of these, however, is very, very small; and they are found mostly among women, or among men in whom the emotional or woman-nature is large. They are not often found among practical men, or men of a speculative turn of mind. Once in a while, in a rare case, like that of Jonathan Edwards, who possessed a comprehensive, speculative nature, there is that experience of the recognition of the Divine, the ever-presence of God, which enables one to say that all his life long he has walked with God; but as I have already said, such cases are very infrequent.

CONVENTIONALISTS.

You will find, next, a great many who will talk as if they had this experience, and perhaps even think they have, while they have it not; that is to say, there springs up, under the constant ministration of the gospel, a peculiar form of conventionalism, such that persons, who know what their duty is, talk as if the fulfillment of that known duty, after which they are striving, were their actual condition, "with such qualifications and limitations, of course, as belong to poor human nature," they say. If you scrutinize and go behind the conventional expressions which are used, you will generally find that in those who even honestly use them there is no such sense of an ever-present God,

in beauty and glory, as really fires and fills their souls, and illumines their experience.

GENERAL BELIEVERS.

Next, you will find (and in larger numbers) those who have an intellectual conception of God, — well-educated men and women, — who now and then are kindled into a glow by that conception; who, under the excitement of special griefs and sorrows, or under the stimulus of peculiar joys, or under the influence of protracted meetings or other unusual occasions, or in consequence of those rare conjunctions which occur, and which light up everything and fill everything with glory, — as does this day from out of the bosom of winter, — who, under such circumstances, they know not how nor why, have distinct conceptions of God and of his attributes, so co-ordinated that all their objections are answered, and they do come to have a general faith in God. But it is not a God *present* that they conceive of. It is God, but it is not *Immanuel*, — it is not *God present with us*. These, as I remarked, form a much larger class than the others of whom I spoke.

THE RESPECTABLE MAJORITY.

Next to them is a still larger class, that constitute the great middle portion of society, as they will of your parish, namely, those who have, in the main, only about this conception of God, and of his character and administration: that there is the heaven above; the earth beneath; the succession of the seasons; the framework of universal government; and, above all these, One who made them, and wound them up, and rolled

them out, and keeps them agoing, and takes care of them. To them God is the great Functionary of the universe. Sometimes, in their estimation, he is Architect; he is Machinist, sometimes; he is Administrator, sometimes. They regard him as the One who *does* everything. They look upon him very much as we look upon the "government" at Washington, as having not much personality, but a great deal of function. It seems to me that such is the abiding state of mind in regard to the Divinity among what we call the respectable and reasonable class in the community. They have no great distinctness of thought concerning God. They think of him as the performer of great functions, rather than as a person.

HOME-HEATHEN.

Then comes the great under-class, a nebulous-minded people, who neither know nor think much about God. You will be surprised to find how many there are of them. You will be surprised to find how many there are of them in New Haven. I have noticed that the worst people are in New England, as well as the best. I have noticed, for instance, that if you take the class of skeptics, they are more malignant and viperous, a hundred times, in New England, than they are in New Orleans. The pressure of moral feeling is so great here that if men do not submit to it, it crowds them down, and at bottom they oppose it and resent it, and bring against it everything that is hard in New England resistance. There is an intensity and vitality to their opposition which is fearful, sometimes.

Then there is also an ignorance in New England, I

think, such as you will hardly find anywhere else. It may not be so right where you live, nor just where your mission school is, perhaps; but not far from your vicinity it is so. If you search all the neighborhood around, you will find men that are ignorant enough. You do not need to go a great way from home to be among the heathen. If you take the trouble to look up those who are degraded, and you regard every man in the township as worthy of your acquaintance, and you gauge him, and sound his intellectual state and moral consciousness, and find what level he stands on, you will be astonished at the number of those who live not only without hope, but literally without God in the world.

Here, then, is your work laid out for you as a preacher of the gospel. You may have a primary relation to the Church; but no matter what community you are settled in, you are settled for the sake of that community; and you are to bear your distributive part of the labor which needs to be performed outside of church walls. You are to preach the great central truth of the universe of God so that it shall be made known to the ignorant, and be made more intelligible to those who know him already, although you can be but an auxiliary to those who have an intellectual conception of the Divine nature. You have an important work in preaching to those who think of God merely in his functions; but still more important is your work in behalf of that great under-class which represents, I might almost say, the *detritus* of society.

HOW TO PREACH GOD.

I merely allude to these things. The question which I purpose to discuss this afternoon is, simply: How shall the character of God be presented, not to yourselves, but to others, in such a way that they shall accept this great ideal, this invisible fact, this truth, which lies outside of the sphere of the ordinary senses? That is a theme which is worth your pondering.

HIS PERSONALITY TO BE REALIZED.

A personal sense of God, then, you are to beget among the people of your charge.

In doing this, you are to bear in mind that in moral things, as in esthetics, as in mathematics, as in poetry, as in oratory, as in any department in which the mind acts, men have different degrees of recipiency. That which is easy for one man is often very difficult for another, owing to the difference in their framework, or else owing to depravities by which the moral sense has been lowered in tone or almost obliterated. Therefore, you will succeed almost without effort with some while you will succeed with others only by very great labor. With many the task will be long and severe.

You should not go into this work with the consciousness that you are to get up a series of sermons, say, on the attributes of God, discussing first all his natural attributes, and secondly, all his moral attributes, for you may preach on the natural and moral attributes of God, and not preach God at all. If you were to go into the consideration of the Divine attributes you would have so many discussions of so many questions

of mental philosophy that you would fail to unfold the idea of a *present* God, of whom these are economic elements. Your task is not alone, as you will see, to discuss those qualities which belong to the universal mind, but to succeed in presenting this abstract, *ideal* Being in such a way that he shall be a *real* Being to those who hear you.

HIS EXISTENCE NOT TO BE ARGUED.

I have not, therefore, much opinion of attempts to prove the existence of God. I doubt whether any man will ever be won from skepticism by having the existence of God proved to him. I doubt it because I doubt whether the evidence of God's existence comes to our sensuous reason. If it does, I think it comes remotely, and as an auxiliary to an impression that has already been established on other grounds. My own feeling is that you may very safely assume the existence of God, and that, having assumed it, your chief work in this direction will be to *illustrate the Divine nature.* There is at the bottom a moral consciousness in mankind such that when you shall have skillfully and correctly unfolded the true character of God, especially as pertaining to personality, the mind will naturally accept it.

There is no use of demonstrating to men that there is music in one of Mozart's or Beethoven's symphonies. *Play it,* and I will defy them to get rid of saying that there is music in it. They recognize it at once.

You may fail to demonstrate by logical argument that you are good-natured; but if you stay with an ugly man all day, and never lose your temper, and repay sweetness for sourness, and kindness for unkind-

ness, he will be obliged to acknowledge that you are good-natured. You could not prove to him in words that you had a good-natured disposition, but he could not resist the conviction that you had, if you were in his presence, and were uniformly good-natured.

There is such a thing as the action of being on being. We recognize it in lower life; and my belief is, that it belongs still more essentially to the higher life. When the being of God itself is unfolded by the Divine Spirit, and made luminous, there is a moral consciousness in the mind of man which cannot help responding. I believe that this moral consciousness is universal, and that in the presence of it argument falls to the ground as needless.

I have, besides this, a conviction that without a proper appeal to this moral consciousness, the mere intellect being addressed, arguments to prove that there is a God will have no more effect than hailstones on Gibraltar.

There is no objection to a man's arguing the subject of the existence of God from the pulpit, if he is pretty sure that his people believe it; but unless he knows that it is an accepted truth among them, I would advise him not to argue it. As has been said by Joubert (whose wisdom is of a high order, and whose writings I wish could be translated), there is danger of exciting unbelief by attempting to argue things which are not within the sphere of argument, the effect being to stir up combativeness in men, and the gladiatorial spirit. A man may be led to meet your arguments, — by which, as it were, you defy investigation, — with a skepticism which otherwise would slumber.

MAN'S MORAL NEED TO BE MET.

I would recommend you not to attempt, then, unless you are pretty sure of your people, to argue that there is a God, nor to attempt to prove his existence. I should assume it, always. But there should be a presentation of God which should meet that moral consciousness of which I have spoken. I know not that I shall make myself quite understood, but I think there can be a presentation of God made which all men's hearts, at one time or another, would crave fervently, and of which they would say, "Let it be true! *Let it be true!*" I can conceive of such a presentation of God, as monarchical and despotic, that all good men would say, "O, let it *not* be true!" There is surely such a way of making known God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, that at one time or another men under burdens, men in sorrow, men whose hopes have been blighted, men who are without sympathy in life, lonely men, troubled men, dissatisfied men, men aching with pride and selfishness, — first or last, men like these shall be buoyed up by it, it shall be to them like the coming on of spring to the patient in her chamber, and every aspiration in them shall say, "O, *let there be* such a God! *I need him.*"

At such a time as this, when science is tending to undermine men's faith, when so many influences are drawing us away from a conception of God, and planting doctrine on sensuous foundations (where it cannot be demonstrated), the wise course, it seems to me, is to lift up such a conception of the Divine nature that everything that is true and noble in men shall long for

it. God should be made so altogether lovely in the preacher's presentation of him, that the world will not consent to have him dethroned from their ideas or from their faith.

THREE ELEMENTS OF PRESENTATION.

There are three things, then, that you should seek to do in attempting to present God to men aright, — first, to establish his *personality;* second, to illustrate his *disposition;* third, to give and keep a sense of his *presence.* These three elements — personality, disposition or character, and ever-presence — it is important to unfold, so that God shall be a *God with us,* and not a God afar off from us.

THE DIVINE PERSONALITY.

As regards the Divine personality, I speak of it as distinguished, in the first place, from pantheism, or from those things which tend toward an impersonal God. It is not necessary for me to go into a discussion of the idea that God is the universe, as he has been represented to be. I only say that this idea is a thing so scattered, so absolutely unconcentrated, that it is in effect a mere atmosphere, and an atmosphere so rarefied that men cannot breathe it. It is absolutely without moral effect. And, although it may seem to be very harmless, yet, to say "no God" is to me no worse than to say "impersonal God."

Next to this, I rank what are called the theories of "the unknowable" in God. Men hold, almost *a priori,* that the Divine nature must be so very high above ours, that it is not knowable by us. No person at all

instructed in the Word of God ever teaches that we can perfectly understand the Almighty; but cannot the human mind grasp so much of the Divine nature as to know it in kind, if not in degree? May we not know the quality of God's being, without knowing its quantity? May we not know what water is, when we see a drop? May I not know what the Atlantic Ocean is made of, by seeing a tumblerful of water? As far as it goes, a drop is the same as the sea, — the same, not in magnitude, but in quality. The rill that comes running down from the seams of the rock, and the flowing stream that helps to make the gushing river below, and the lake into which the river empties, — all these are types of the ocean; that is, they tell me what water is. They cannot exactly tell me what shapes it assumes, or what its power is; but from these I can learn its constituent elements just as I could from the Atlantic itself. And although there is much that is unknowable in regard to the Divine nature, yet there are elements of it which may be known, and which, being known, make it a power on the hearts and consciences of men.

To say to me that a thing is of a different color from anything that we know; to tell me that its color is magnificent, but that it is not white, nor black, nor red, nor green, nor blue, nor yellow, nor purple; to tell me that it comes nearer to red than anything else, but that it does not come near to that at all; to tell me that it comes near to something that it does not resemble, but that it would resemble if it were something very different from what it is, — would be not only to give me no conception of the thing, but to

destroy any conception of it which I might already have. And to say to me of the Divine nature, that it comes near to intellection, but that it is not intellection; that it comes near to the will, but that it is not the will; that it comes near to benevolence, but that it is not benevolence, is to annihilate my conception of that nature. These terms which seem to describe the Supreme Being to men have the effect of destroying the influence on their minds of the representation which is made of him.

THE USES OF ANALYSIS.

Personality, as distinguished from abstract analysis, is one of the ends which you are to seek. Do not misunderstand me by thinking that I am disposed to dissuade you from a philosophical analysis of the Divine nature. It is a part of mental philosophy, and it belongs to a scientific study of that philosophy: but at the same time an analysis of it takes away its life-form.

You may analyze a flower, in order to understand it; but if there were only one flower in the universe, as soon as you analyzed it there would no longer be one, — it would be gone. If you take it to pieces to examine it, and if you submit it to the laboratory, you have the elements of it, but not its organic structure. Certainly you have not its life. That has been taken away by the analysis. If there are plenty of flowers, and, after you have analyzed one, you go back to the life-form, then you gain; but in the simple analysis you lose. In merely analyzing God you lose, because you place him in the category of abstract ideas. You take away his vitality, as I might say, so that he is no

more a Divine Being. Thus, when you argue that God is the sum of love, the sum of benevolence, the sum of universal power, you may properly take every one of those elements and analyze it; but you should not deceive yourself by supposing that in that way you are making known a personal God. It is not until, having gone through the process of analysis, you begin the work of synthesis, and bring back these qualities into a personal form, that you have increased the knowledge of men concerning God. It is a personal God, made up of these things, that you want to bring before the minds of men.

Look for a moment at what would take place. I ask an artist to paint for me the portrait of a man. I say to him: "I will describe the man as he is, and I want you to represent him on canvas. First, he has a bone system, — mark that down, Mr. Painter; secondly, he has a muscular system, — add that; he also has an arterial and venous system, — add that too; then he has a nerve system, which begins at the head, and runs all the way down through the man, — put that in; he has likewise a forehead, eyes, a nose, a mouth, and ears, — these are to be included." Could an artist paint a portrait from such an inventory of qualities? Could he represent any part of a man who was described to him in that way?

A man attempts to describe to me the woman of his love, saying, "She is five feet, four inches high; she has brown hair; she has eyes — two of them; she has a nose; she has a mouth; she has ears; she smells with her nose, and eats with her mouth, and sees with her eyes, and hears with her ears; she has feet, and she

walks on them; she has hands, and she uses them; she has a heart, — oh, what a heart! Do you wonder that I admire her?"

How vague such a description would be! It may be a very superficial analysis, but it is all the worse if you carry it out a great way further; for analysis is taking a thing apart; it is taking it out of organization and personality; and if you cannot produce a sense of personality by analyzing a human being, and enumerating his different parts, do not think that by partitioning the Divine nature for the purpose of making God known you can produce a sense of his personality. For to say to me that God is wise, and just, and good, does not give me any very particular idea of him.

I will describe to you two men who are as different as they possibly can be, — General Grant and General Sherman; and I will say that both of them have very great fortitude, that both of them have very great patience, running even to obstinacy; that both of them have very sharp and clear intellects; that both of them have foresight; that both of them have very great sympathy with their fellow-men; that both of them are very skillful; and that both of them are apt to be victorious. Those terms describe them both generically, and yet they are as different as it is possible for them to be in other respects. General Grant is square, short, and thick; and General Sherman is long, lean, and lathy. General Grant is very taciturn; and General Sherman is never silent, — I suppose he talks in his sleep! General Grant thinks everything out, and General Sherman sees things by intuition. General Grant is secretive, and General Sherman is open as a

child. You must go further than the *genus*, or you do not describe men.

Herein lies one of the great mistakes into which preachers fall. They do not produce a sense of the personality of God, because they preach analytic views, analytic views, analytic views, of God all the time.

Now, when you have indoctrinated men, by analysis, in the character of God, and in the qualities or elements into which it is analyzed, if you have the power, by synthesis, of bringing them back and combining them again, that is all very well. Or, to change the figure, if, instead of forever distributing type, you distribute it simply because you wish every letter to be in its proper department in order that it may be easily found when it is wanted for new combinations, then you may bring it back, by composition, and spell out that incomprehensible Name which the Jews revered, and which the Scriptures disclosed. For, in looking at God, two processes are employed, — first, that of separating the qualities of his nature, so that each shall be distinct from every other; and secondly, that of gathering them together again, and forming them into a unit: then you have a Person who stands out by himself, and who can never be confounded with another person.

PERSONALITY NOT FUNCTIONAL CONDITION.

God's personality, too, should be presented as distinct from his functions; for, one may lose entirely the sense of the Divine personality, by turning the mind, or having it turned almost continuously, upon what God does, or what God says. That is, if you say of God that he is Creator, that he is Lawgiver.

that he is Upholder, that he is Judge, that he is Punisher, you say only what has been said, and said fitly, of Jupiter, what has been said of Brahma, and what may be properly said of any semi-civilized deity. Such deities are conceived of as having performed various essential functions; and you cannot bring Jehovah distinctly before the mind in that way. You cannot in that way produce a sense of the difference between Jove and Jehovah. It does not represent a person toward whom one can fulfill the command, "Thou shalt love."

No man, I suppose, ever yet fell in love with a problem. Men may like problems, but no man can love them. No man ever yet fell in love with a proposition in mental philosophy; no man ever fell in love with an abstraction; no man ever fell in love with a conception of power; but men fall in love with dispositions. And the character of God is to be so preached that all elements of wisdom and of power will stand around his great central disposition, which should make him something admirable, to be thought of, to be followed, and to be obeyed. With such a presentation of God you can love, but without it you cannot love.

When the elements of the Divine nature are known and are brought into personality, there will be great power in preaching. A peculiarity of the Bible is, that it contains these elements in itself.

COMPLETE CONCEPTION OF GOD IMPOSSIBLE.

I had occasion, last week, to call your attention to that character of God which is presented in the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus. Another description of God

is given in the Old Testament, which I think is extraordinary when you regard the time in which it emerged, namely, the description which God gives of himself. In one place he says, "I am that I am"; and in another place, "I am he." Abstraction can be carried no further than it is carried in these passages; and it seems to me something astounding, far back in the time of that pictorial people, — that people of an old Semitic language, in which everything was graphic and dramatic, — to see these declarations of God: that he transcends knowledge, and that he exists in his own absolutely unapproachable totality, as where he says, substantially, "I am myself; I am all that I am; I am because I am; look upon me, indescribable and wonderful past all pronunciation."

Continually there are such statements, and others, declaring that we cannot know God unto perfection; that he is, in every respect, so large and so good that no man can rise to a conception of him. This is declared, after the manifestation of God in Christ Jesus, and even down as late as the time of Paul, who says that we can only see God as through a glass, darkly. We have the declaration in the first Epistle of John, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." In other words, the declaration is, "We are allied to him as sons," and yet we have very little intimation of what it is to have such a Father. The largeness of it, the fullness of it, and the grandeur of it, transcend our comprehension.

Bring me out of the Music Hall in Boston, one by one, the magnificent array of stops in that great organ,

and lay them on the trial-board, and let a man blow every one of them, first sounding the wald-flute, next the diapason, and then the others in their order, and I can form some imagination of what the effect would be if they were all put together and sounded, — especially if I had heard other organs; and yet, when I go at twilight in the evening, where some John Zundel, who thinks with his hands, whose brains run down to the ends of his fingers, and who is pouring out, for his own comfort and enjoyment, devotional thoughts and feelings through the tones of that grand instrument, with all its combined power and richness, then I say, in my amazement, "Fool! fool! that I should have supposed that I had ever heard this organ!" I had heard every one of its stops, and had some conception of what it would be to hear them after they were put together; but when I heard them after they were put together, I found that the conception which I had was entirely inadequate.

When I go up to heaven, — if it please God to give me admission to his presence, — I shall know what love is. I do know what love is; for is there no love on earth? I know what justice is; is there no justice on earth? I know what generosity is; is there no generosity on earth? But when I stand in Zion, and before God, and see what infinite justice, infinite generosity, and infinite love are, — when I see that they have no bounds, no latitude nor longitude, and that they have endless diversities and combinations, — then there will rise upon my thought a conception of God's majesty and riches and power and grandeur, such that I shall say, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the

ear, but now mine eye seeth thee"; but I shall not say, "I repent in dust and ashes"; for I shall be lifted up by the hand of God's love, I shall be called his own, and I shall be able to look him in the face, and stand as his redeemed child, spirit to spirit. I do know much of God; and yet, comparatively speaking, I know nothing of him. I do understand God, and yet he passes understanding.

So you shall find other passages which go to show that God was revealed to men personally in those old times; but I cannot see how such conceptions of him as then existed came into their minds in any other way except by the infusion of the Divine Spirit. By searching we cannot find out God; but we can find out much about him, — enough to give us something to worship and to love.

RICHNESS OF THE BIBLE METHOD.

See how the Bible represents God, in order to convey an idea of his personality. See how he is brought down to our conditions. See how he walks and rides. See how all things in nature are made to speak of him. See how he produces on the minds of children — Old Testament men — a sense of his personality.

Let any man read the Book of Isaiah and say, if he can, that there has not risen on his imagination a most magnificent conception of a personal God, which has more than any abstraction or any metaphysical creation. There rises a majestic figure before the minds of those who read that book, which fills them with a conception of One whom they can adore.

Sometimes men say that the Old Testament is worn

out. When the heavens are worn out and men no more need to understand God, then the Old Testament may be worn out, but not until then. I hardly hesitate to say that you could not understand the New Testament if it were not for the great and grand background upon which God stands unfolded. The Old Testament is wonderfully adapted to the wants of the mind in childhood and in the savage state, and to the preparation of the mind, all through the different stages of civilization, for the higher condition of human culture. There is nothing like it. And it is a marvel to me, being, as it is, the work, not of one painter but of many, and the illustrations being wrought out by one and another and another, all working together without jar or discord, and the result being a representation of a God so personal that when he is said to perform any function it is a *Person* that is conceived of as performing that function, and the sense of personality, made up of the various Divine attributes, being larger and more influential than those same attributes taken separately.

The fault of men in preaching God is in not producing in their hearers a sense of his personality, although in the Bible the representation of that personality is such that, relatively, all other representations fall into insignificance in the comparison.

LEANNESS OF PHILOSOPHICAL METHODS.

Let any man take the Old Testament, and compare it with the efforts which have been made to represent God by any other method than this. I will not compare it with the efforts of pantheists, — for I will not

argue with mists; but let any man compare it with the efforts which have been made by Mansel. I do not know whether you have read his lectures. They are admirable; but in reading them I could not help feeling how weak they came out. It is pitiful to see how faint and feeble is the result of the efforts of a Christian philosopher, who meant to do well, in developing the unknowable.

I could not preach any such God as he and others portray. I had the good fortune to be pitched into the ministry headlong, without anything to do but to make men better, — for really my stock of *theology that I believed in* was very small. I have increased it very much since, but it was meager enough then; and my business was to do what I could for men, and let theology take care of itself. I had nothing but the Bible to go to; and I remember times of deep water, when I took what I could get out of the Bible to help people with; and as I went out to help them, I felt something that demanded an idea of God; and I fell back on the Old Testament, as well as on the New, for my conceptions of him. In my early ministry I studied to preach God so as to touch the imagination, the reason, and the affections of men; and I learned to have great respect for that element in preaching which develops steadily and continuously the attributes of the Divine Being in such a way as to give men an idea of a Person that they could love as well as fear.

Now, when I look at writers and scholarly men, and see how they have patched up their ideas of the unknowable, and how they have analyzed God, I feel that

if I had to preach those things in the pulpit I would throw sermon and book under the desk, and would never touch them again.

Look at Herbert Spencer's God. I do not revile Herbert Spencer; many of the stones that will shine out by and by in the completed temple of God will have come from his hands; but I think his writings should be taken as the disciples took the wheat, which they ate, *rubbing it in their hands.* In taking his philosophy you have to take a great deal of straw and chaff, as well as much wheat. As to his presentation of God, it is nothing. It is exactly what the annual joke of our Professor Snell, in Amherst College, was, when he said, "Gentlemen, you will perceive this invisible ball!"

And yet, testing such men and their reasonings, it will be found that they are like the Hirams that Solomon employed, who wrought in marble, and brass, and silver, and gold, and ivory. They are working, each in his own way, on that building of God which is being carried up through the ages. If you look at that which any one of them is doing by himself, it seems like poorness, indeed; but if you take a comprehensive view of that which they are all doing, you will be surprised at the richness of it.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

Now, there is nothing that will fill your soul like the representations of God in the Old Testament and in the New; and do not separate the Old from the New when you are studying the character of God. You cannot get along without them both. Your Christ

cannot at any other time be such a Christ, nor such a representation of God, as when you see the person of Jehovah as he is described in the Old Testament.

In preaching God, assume the truth of his existence; and preach so that your people shall see that he is a living Person, with whom they can hold commerce.

IV.

CONCEPTIONS OF THE DIVINITY.

February 19, 1874.

PREACHING OF GOD, A SOURCE OF POWER.

I SPOKE to you yesterday, young gentlemen, upon your office as presenting to the minds of congregations the true idea of God. As that was said in Scripture to be the center of all truth, the starting-point and end, also, of revelation itself, so it must be the very center, and also the circumference, of your ministerial work; and a right presentation of the Divine character will fill your hands with power. Without that you may not lack power, but you will have it only in the lower ranges. I say this, not theoretically, but out of my own experience. I came to the knowledge of God stumblingly and gradually; but of nothing am I more sure now.

When I discourse for a length of time, analyzing people's characters, criticising various lines of their conduct, and setting forth the motives and the fruit of right or wrong doing in any direction, but still dealing with human nature in human conditions, at the first the congregation listen with keen interest and doubtless

with some profit; but after a little time the interest falls off. And this is because the themes discussed do not rise very much above the lines of life which measure men's lower growth, and deal with what may be called *the inferior natural laws.* But when from that level I have been drawn to go to those themes which involve considerations of the Infinite, of the Eternal, of God in all the elements which belong to the Divine idea, I have found a decided difference of atmosphere, a marked difference of power; and not only that, but there is a lasting quality, that inheres in discourses which deal largely with these supereminent topics.

MEANING OF PERSONALITY.

I said to you yesterday afternoon that there were three things which must be considered in order to rightly instruct your parishioners, namely, the personality of God, the Divine disposition or character, and the sense of the ever-presence of God with men; and I discussed, somewhat at length, the first of these elements, — God's personality. I was asked at the close of the lecture what I meant by *personality.* I said I would answer that question to-day. I do not purpose to give a definition of it in its philosophically disputed or discussed sense.

What I mean by *personality* is a being, separate from the effects which he produces; a being, intelligent, with moral attributes, — with will and purpose in and of himself; in the case of God, a Being who centrally stands related to the universe in the same way in which men stand related to the physical and social world which surrounds them here. A man is a person in distinction

from a tree, a cliff, a house, a stone, or anything of that kind, in this, that he is filled with emotive life, with will, and with moral purpose. But he is also distinct from other men, in that he has an individual organization; that he has his own separateness from other organizations. And what I mean by the Divine personality is, that it is a Being who thinks, feels, wills, and governs, not in the sense in which nature does, but in the sense in which a voluntary sentient creature does, — in a higher sense, too, but in the same general sense.

THE HEIGHT AND THE HUMILITY OF GOD.

Now, in attempting to construct, or rather in attempting to infuse steadily into the minds of your hearers, the true idea of God, make it real to them by bringing it down to their understanding. And you are to remember two things, both of which are Scriptural: First, that the Scripture lifts up a conception of God, and carries it high. There is in the Scriptures most distinctly a metaphysical element, if you choose to call it so, — a philosophical element at any rate; and the ideal is exceedingly high and is clothed with every attribute of power and grandeur and beauty and glory. Secondly, when you have carried up the conception of God in this way, you must counteract it by precisely the opposite tendency, or else you will lift God out of the reach of men's vision, and out of the sphere of human sympathy; and, to all intents and purposes, you will remove the idea of him from men's view.

You will find, I think, in the history of the revelation of God, that in the Old Testament Scriptures, both early and late, there were two streams of repre-

sentation, one of which was all the time exalting God, and the other all the time bringing him back to men from out of that exaltation; showing that this Being of grandeur was nevertheless in intimate personal relations with men, and that in some sense he humbled himself, in order to be represented by the homeliest and commonest of things, so that while men had an idea of perfect wisdom, perfect integrity, perfect purity, or holiness, or righteousness, whichever you may choose to call it, while they felt that he was from eternity to eternity, and while the ideal circle was swept with the most magnificent conceptions of spiritual and moral power, at the same time all that grandeur kissed men, caressed them, nursed them, thought for them, felt for them, wept for them, and laid itself down for them.

Those two processes are carried along very nearly together in the Old Testament; and they must be kept in mind by you, if you are to be able ministers. You must not carry up the idea of God so as to have it evaporate. Do not make God so holy, or holy with such a conception, that he shall be separated from men. There must be a perpetual re-incarnation of the divine thought.

HUMAN ELEMENTS TO REPRESENT THE DIVINE.

Here comes in the great principle of anthropomorphism, — if you will excuse the length of the word, which I did not make. There has been very much said against the employment of anthropomorphism, — the representation of God in human forms, or by human conditions; it is a principle which has been very much contested; and yet I affirm that without it there is no

such thing as making God known to men. It underlies all the Scriptures, Old and New, — the teaching in respect to God; and just as soon as you attempt to represent the Divine nature in any other way, you go off into mysticism, into vague generalities that have no power in them, and that are like clouds which the wind makes, without rain. You will be obliged to represent God by the things which you know in yourself, or in your surroundings.

It becomes very important that you should know how to use this principle; because, while a thing may be right in its theory, it may be in its practice badly applied and most mischievous. It was this principle that led to the formation of the deities of nations that were unillumined by a heavenly inspired record. They took the things which they knew most about, — patience, courage, endurance, heroism, glory, — and framed them into a person, and called this, for instance, Hercules, their god. They made a poor god, but they used the right principle in making him; that is to say, they did the best that they could. They exalted into an infinite sphere, and into supreme power, those parts of human nature which they thought the most of. And when afterwards there were other parts of civilization developed, and these were clustered about the Divine idea, the same principle was carried on.

They had a poor god, not because anthropomorphism is wrong, but because they took the lowest parts of men, — those parts which had been developed, — and made their god out of these. They made him of base materials, taking human passions and fleshly conditions, and transferring them to some mountain-top, and mak-

ing them regnant over all the earth. But if they could have taken the thought of the spirit of God as it has been developed in patriarchs, in prophets, in disciples, in martyrs, in holy men of old and in later days; if they had known how to cull and sift out the higher elements of manhood, and how to combine them around some appropriate center, — they would have proceeded in the true direction of constructing in the human mind an idea of God.

HUMAN SYMBOLISM OF GOD.

We are to recollect that all we can do is to obtain what may be called a symbol, — something which shall bring God to our imagination and our thought. No man can see the whole of the Divine nature; no man can represent all of it; no man can, by any process either within or without himself, do more than to make that which shall resemble God, as an idea is resembled by letters, which have the power of making the thing itself spring up in the man when he sees the word which they compose. The letters l-o-v-e and h-a-t-e, alphabetically, separated, detached, have no power nor significance; but if they are combined to form the words *love* and *hate*, when they strike the eye one flame of thought and feeling bursts out on one side, and another and different flame of thought and feeling on another side. Being brought together thus, they have the power of symbols, and convey ideas to our minds.

So, though men may readily construct the Divine idea, they must construct it of things which are in the nature of symbols, and which only approach the reality. And this Divine idea will differ in magnitude and

purity according to the character of the elements which are employed in its construction, according to their combinations, and according to the additions that are made to them from time to time.

I am sure that all there is of God is not simply that which can come through the eye-gate, through the ear-gate, through any one part, or through all the parts, of the human structure. I believe that, while we have much thought of God which can be comprehended by the human mind, there is much more which the human mind cannot comprehend. I believe that there are "thrones, and principalities, and powers," which we shall understand when we come to our higher development, but which are hidden from us now; just as there is that in a father which the child does not understand, but which he grows up to a knowledge of, little by little. Yet, so far as the child does understand the father, his understanding of him is real and is right, — only the father is much more and far better than the child thinks or can appreciate.

INVISIBLE LIGHT.

I was powerfully struck, my breath was almost taken away, by the inspiration of thought which came to my mind when Professor Tyndall showed that, aside from the beams of light that were visible, and which we had recognized as belonging to light, there were also other parts of light which we never had recognized, and which we had no sense to detect, — when he showed that there were qualities of light which man was without any faculty directly to appreciate, and the existence of which he could only know from the fact that when

it passed through the prism and showed the spectrum there was chemical effect produced beyond the visible spectrum, which indicated the existence of elements there that could not be detected by the sight.

We had investigated this subject, and we thought we knew what was the composition of light; but here was this additional truth developed on one side, and very likely there will be other truths developed on other sides. Undoubtedly there will be truths of light and of other elements discovered which we have not yet comprehended.

Now, if this be so in the material realm, how much more true must it be in the spiritual! How easily may we suppose that there are elements of truth respecting the existence of God Almighty, respecting his character and his ways, which we do not see! Although there is much that belongs to his nature that we can see dimly, yet there is something more, and something brighter than all that, which we do not see, but which we shall see by and by.

When I am asked, "How shall we use the idea of God which we have constructed so as to affect different persons in different experiences?" I reply that we must, having by reason and imagination prepared the materials for the Divine idea, separate them from that which arises from man's weakness and imperfection, so that the development of that idea will go with the development of the man himself.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

No man sees more of God than he has in himself. There must be in him those elements through which

he comes to a knowledge or experience of the Divine.

THE OLD TESTAMENT SYMBOLISM.

I purpose now to show you how, using this method in a much larger sphere, the Old Testament teachers did produce in the minds of the Hebrew people a conception of God.

First, as I have said, there was the grand Ideal, the metaphysical Spirit, the Cause, the Sovereignty; but what sort of a Being was this Ruler who was lifted up above time and chance, and all counsel, and help of every kind? Take notice how this idea of God was constructed in men so that he should be brought very near to them. In the first place, names and illustrations from every side of human knowledge were gathered together, showing how to reach men's consciences, and showing likewise that all creation was needed in order, by the help of its many particulars, to work out a conception, faint though it would be, of that which really was infinite.

First come the things which are known by our senses. Did it ever occur to you to go through the Old Testament, and see how much use is made there, in describing God, or the Divine operations, of the seasons, of storms, of clouds, of the wind, of the sea, of mountains and their caverns, of grass, of things that belong to summer and winter, of things that are organic and that grow, or of things that are inorganic and ungrowing? All these things were employed abundantly, and each one, if I may so say, with an exquisite adaptation that is very remarkable.

For instance, God is described as being a "Rock"; and, at once, in your thought, he is a Defence; and firmness, hardness, and inexpugnableness are the qualities which you associate with him. But a rock is something more than a defence. We have the expression, "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Ah! then, it is not any longer that God is merely strong and enduring; there is an element of protection, of helpfulness, in his strength, which throws its shadow upon men.

What are clouds to you? To me they are babies' baskets; they are flocks of sheep; they are caravans going through the desert air; to me they are vast cities and battlements, as they stand piled up along the horizon. Clouds are what to you? Signs of rain, — weather-gauges, perhaps; they are this, that, or the other, according to the cast of his mind who observes them. What were they to the Hebrew? God's chariots. They had a meaning, when he looked upon them, which took him right back to God.

What is a storm to you? An equatorial current, drifting northward, — the compensation of some other current going southward. What is it to your neighbor? The result of some condition of the atmosphere, in which moisture and cold meet. What were storms to the old Hebrew? What were thunder and lightning? What were the convulsions of nature? They were the stepping forth of God's feet, which shook the earth. The lightning was the flash of his eye. The thunder was his voice as he spoke to men. Rivers, mountains, trees, told of the presence of the Lord in the whole earth. To the Hebrew, matter, organic or

inorganic, was the element from which attributes were derived that, by transfer, came to be associated with the Divine nature.

Living animals were employed in the same way. God is called a Lion, an Eagle, and a Dove. He is spoken of, by way of symbolization, as an Ox and as a Serpent. So you will find that the whole domestic economy, in relation to the animal kingdom, was brought, in one way and another, to bring certain suggestions, and to make certain contributions, to the growing conception of the invisible God.

The processes of industry were employed in like manner. God was a Husbandman to the minds of the Jews. It would be considered very irreverent if men were to point to heaven and speak of "that Farmer up there"; and yet the old Jews spoke of God as a Husbandman. He was a Vine-dresser; he was a Gardener; he was a Vintner; he was a Shepherd, who went out with flocks. These things were alphabetic, as it were, and spelled out the Jewish conception of God.

The same is true in the category of public officers. God is King; he is Judge; he is Captain; he is Ruler; he is Governor of the universe; and these titles are not unmeaning or accidental: they are transferred from ideas that have been elaborated from the experience and observation of men, and that have been used towards filling up the great metaphysical circle in which there are infinite steps, and which has infinite containing power. Each man is all the time making himself familiar with some conception of God, by ascribing to him qualities wrought out by his own earthly experience.

LIMITATION OF SYMBOLS.

I may say here, in passing, what I shall have occasion to say more at large by and by, that in regard to much of what goes into the theory of the Divine law, the transfer has been unwisely made. It has been urged that God, being a Lawgiver, must do so and so; but it would be unfair to hold him responsible for everything that belongs to objects to which he is likened. For instance, it would be unfair to impute to him all the qualities which are in the lion. *Lion* means strength, it means courage, it means irresistible impetus; and these qualities are worthy to be carried up and ascribed to God; but all the rest of the lion had better be omitted from the elements which are employed for symbolizing God.

Ox means enduring strength; and in that sense it would be appropriate to use it as signifying continuity of the Divine will in natural law; but beefsteaks for food, ox-hide for shoes, and a swinging tail to keep flies off, would not be appropriate things with which to represent the attributes of God. We do not want the lower uses of those symbols which are derived from nature. There is a spinal cord running through them, there is a cerebral spot in them; and that is the only part which you are to take. In eating oysters you take the meat, but not the shell. In printing, it is just the face of the type that is wanted to show the character of the impression. And there are given qualities, particular elements, certain relations of natural objects, which add to the conception of the Divine nature that is formed in men's minds; and these are to be pre-

served; but the inferior parts are to be shredded off. You are to take the various symbols of God which you find in the Bible and elsewhere, and treat them as you do a banana when you eat it, taking off the skin; or as you do an apple, throwing away the peel.

SOCIAL SYMBOLS.

In the relations of man to man, we find that which enables us to conceive of God as father. There is nobody who does not know what *fatherhood* means; nor is there anything nobler than the idea which we derive from it; but you will mark how almost never in the Old Testament is brought in that other word which is sweeter, even, than the name of *father*. This fact indicates the difference between the present and four thousand years ago. If men had thought of *mother* as we do now, if the usages of society had given her the relative position which she has to-day, then we should have had something of motherhood as well as something of fatherhood transferred to the conception or building up of the Divine nature. I think it was the want of that element which created the Virgin Mary, and led men to attempt to bring out somewhere a substitute for it.

God is a Protector to the widow, to the orphan, to the weak; he is a Shelter to the exposed; he is a Deliverer to the captive; he is a Guide to the lost; he is a Comforter to those who mourn; he is a Physician to those who are sick. These are all relationships drawn from the social conditions of man. When refined and sanctified, and carried up to the Divine, each makes one more letter in the spelling out of the incommunicable name of God.

Domestic relations; relations of the household; relations of husband and wife, of parents and children, and of brothers and sisters, — these are all a part of the primitive elements in this grand transfer from earth to God, of the qualities, that are wrought out by human experience.

WHY THESE ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN USED.

All matter, then, all mind, all relationships in society, all growths of nature, all development of civilization, all business, all government, all outworkings of affection, — these things have been prepared and raised to the higher sphere, as interpreters of qualities that work more and more by development in the Divine nature.

To say that God is infinitely holy, infinitely righteous, is to say a thing which to us is far grander than it could have been at the beginning of the world. We know what holiness is; but what was holiness to them? What could they know of holiness, who bought their wives and sold their children? Where men made no distinction between living beings and property, and regarded their offspring as of no more importance than colts or calves, what meaning could they attach to those terms which implied delicacy, self-sacrifice, love, disinterestedness, long-suffering, and magnanimity? These things could not have been understood by them; they have to be taught to men. And they cannot be taught by revelation; for words do not mean anything to men until there is developed in them that which those words represent. So a gradual process of evolvement was necessary. Here is where the principle of anthropomorphism comes in; and the whole round of

nature was employed to lift up the conception of Divinity, in order that he might come near to men, and be understandable by them.

GROWTH IN CONCEPTIONS OF GOD.

When this process had gone on to a certain extent, then the world began to feel the movement which has come on down to our day. When you reach the Psalms and the Prophets (minor and major), and the Book of Job, then you see how this Being, thus formed by the national mind, develops little by little, and more clearly, until he begins to speak as a Teacher and as a Magistrate; and then you see him pointing out the lines of duty, and using the imagination, using reason and hope, using pain and joy; then you see him treating men no longer as animals in the stall, but as beings far above the level where the race began; and then you see that he begins to display divine intelligence. One can scarcely read such passages as are contained in that Book of Job, after pursuing the line of thought which I have attempted to disclose this afternoon, without recognizing the correctness of this view, of which I have given but the merest outline, not going into that detail of which it is susceptible, if time would permit.

Now consider, still further, how this idea, thus gradually formed in the minds of men, has been taught in such a way as to bring it still nearer to them. If you have had a father whom everybody thought well of, and who has been everything to you, you could hardly be touched in any way more quickly than by hearing kindly reference to him. You are greatly pleased if one says to you, "O, I knew your father! Then you

are the son of my old friend. Come, go home with me; come, walk with me; come, I must see you. I knew him well, and loved him." A sense of the honor and dignity and glory of the father is very precious to the child.

Do you recollect Jacob's prayer?

It was not, "O Jehovah"; it was not, "O thou omniscient, omnipotent God"; it was not, "O my metaphysical Superior." It was, "O God of Isaac, my father!" How that made the whole sphere of God ring like a bell in his heart! Did you ever try it? If you never did, then it is because you never have known sin and darkness. I have tried it in deep midnight. There was no God of providence and grace that I could call on; to me the idea of such a God was like mountain-tops in mist; but I could say, "O God of my father and of my mother," and he was at hand: and there was brought to me, quick, the sense that in God there was a love which was stronger than my father's, and sweeter than my mother's; and I clasped the idea, and was comforted in it.

What impulse, in a noble nature, is stronger than love for his country, and for those great names which are the honor and the glory of that country, and are its representatives? Do you suppose it was without a reason that the old Jews used to pray, "Lord God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob"? Did not that prayer bring right to their memory and to their sensibility all the things of which the Jew was proud, — the glory of his origin, and the grandeur of all those names that stand up now like mountains in the long stretch backward? The crook of the earth, the bend of time,

never sends their tops down below the horizon; and when the Jew prayed there was a whole volume of patriotism that gushed into his mind, and interpreted God to him.

See how, throughout the history of the Jewish nation, God was represented in government. See how there are Psalm after Psalm and song after song in which the name of God is celebrated. And see how God is represented as the One who brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, and led them like a flock in the wilderness; as the one before whom the sea fled, and armies trembled and melted away. See how the Hebrews, all through their method of teaching, represented God through their personal affections, — through their sense of fatherhood and motherhood, through their love of country, and through their pride of race. And ought there not to be something like that yet?

The idea of God having been inspired in men, and clothed with every noble attribute which was derivable from men's knowledge, it was brought to bear in human conduct. Justice, purity, fidelity, reverence, and righteousness were qualities which were then understood as existing in God; because the conception of God had little by little been built from specimens of these qualities in a low and imperfect state, sublimated and carried up, which kindled in the hearts of men a truer idea of God than otherwise could have been developed in them.

Take Matthew Arnold. His writings are very pleasant, and they contain a great deal of valuable thought; but when Mr. Matthew Arnold tells us that there is no personal God, that there is only a stream of tendencies,

and that the Hebrews believed, not in a personal God, but only in those great causes which made for righteousness, I confess I stop. Mr. Arnold has a perfect right to say that he does not believe in a personal God; but in the name of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets of Israel, I protest against his saying that the old Hebrews did not believe in God's personality. He might just as well say that I do not believe in it, that you do not believe in it, that the whole race do not believe in it. That would not be a more audacious thing than the other.

THE BARRENNESS OF ABSTRACT PREACHING.

We are now prepared to consider our own method of preaching and teaching about God to our own people, in these modern days.

In the first place, it is largely the metaphysical and the abstract that we dwell upon in preaching. I have already alluded to that in various ways. I merely allude to it again to make the statement complete. We are accustomed to preach about God in Latinized periphrastic language, in language which represents the last ideas of civilization. Well, that does good, I hope, to educated men, to men who like to indulge in abstract thought; and yet, on the other hand, it leaves in them a great Sahara. "Man shall not live by bread alone," and he shall not live by brains alone. The best part of a man's life is in his heart. I thank God that, to a large extent, cultivated men do live in their hearts, the scholastic age having passed, and a larger and better age having come in.

I see men going to colleges to preach, and preaching

sermons that are purely intellectual; but, if I were to preach to College Faculty and students, do you think I would hunt up a subject which would require the discussion of abstract questions that were above the reach of ordinary human life, thinking that to be the kind of preaching that they wanted? No; I should say, "They have too much of that already." I should say, "The part of these men that lies in the brain is overfed; and there is a great deal more of them down in the heart that is hungering and wishing that it could be fed." I would preach to that part which unites humanity; which has regard for all men, high or low, rich or poor, home or foreign; which binds mankind together, and makes the race one, the world around. That is a large ground, where men need more influence, and where they are more grateful for it, I think, than anywhere else.

In your preaching it is not enough that you should define God; especially is it not enough that you should explain what are his relations to natural and what to moral law; it is not enough that you should tell your hearers how it was that he constructed the universe, and how he said to himself, "I am going to create the world so and so." One would think, from the minuteness with which these things are described, that the old theologians must have been shorthand reporters, and must have sat and taken notes at the time of creation!

I remember that my venerable old father and Dr. Taylor used to sit for hours together discussing theology in our Litchfield parlor, when the question was, whether God *could* have had a government in which

there should or should not have been sin, and whether or not men could have been free agents. Father would say, "God would have done so and so in such an event"; and Dr. Taylor would say, "Stop, stop, Brother Beecher; God could not have done so; he would have been obliged to do so." Then father would go on and show what God could do and what he could not do, and why he could or could not do it, making a disclosure of the possibilities and the limitations of the Divine Mind which would quite astound Dr. Taylor; and so it went, back and forth, far into the night.

I do not undertake to say that there is not in that direction a range of proper inquisition and discussion; but this I say: beware of making that the substance of your preaching. Do not delude yourself by supposing that thus you are preaching God in any understandable sense to those who listen to you. When you discuss truths of the Divine government, follow the example of the Bible, especially in those parts where God himself instructs the race by his word, through inspired men, in regard to the nature of human society, the one central object being to rear up before men such a conception of the Divine as shall rain down on them a power which will lift men into millennial glory. Not only should we follow that example, but, in order to do it, we should resist that insensible drift which science has given to men's ideas, — science, which I honor and love, but which is not immaculate, and which is imperfect as an educator, — science, that is crude, that is not developed, and that is begetting a tendency among men to see in things nothing but natural, i. e. immediate, causes.

GOD IN NATURE.

To the old Hebrews, a phenomenon was divinity. If they made it literally a deity, without the knowledge of an interjected mediation or cause, there was a mistake on their part; but we are making the same mistake. When we look at an event, it means some law of nature; when we look at rain, it means a change of atmosphere; when we look at clouds, they mean a certain atmospheric condition; when we look at mountains, they mean geological formations; when we look at trees, they mean timber; when we look at birds, they are something good to shoot and eat. In other words, we vulgarize, or we secularize, almost all things in nature. "We must look at them as they are," men say. Look at them as they are! What does that mean? I affirm that it is quite possible for men to have a double line of influence proceeding from a phenomenon, one tracing it in its lower and secular connections, and the other associating it with the great First Cause, that stands back of all things, and fills all things with the fullness of his own self.

No man learns anything readily in sensuous forms who sees it as matter only, and not as the product of Divine thought, — who does not see it, so to speak, as a crystal from some side of which glances the portraiture of the Being that made it; and yet, in connection with natural objects, in connection with things that belong to the departments of manufacture and commerce, in connection with matter-of-fact things, the world is ceasing to talk of God any more.

When we see glaciers, what do we think of? Agassiz

and Tyndall. When we see mountains, what do we think of? This or that theory of geology. It is low; it is ill-bred; and we must go back to the habit of seeing more in nature, and of giving to nature uses in the realm of the imagination and of the affections. It is a habit which we once had, but which we have wellnigh lost.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

I would not for all the comfort which I might get from the books of the Alexandrian Library, or from the Lenox Library, give up the comfort which I get out of nature. Nature, now that I have had the revelation of God which interprets it to me, I would not give up for anything. I had almost said that I would rather lose my Bible than to lose my world. There is no sunlight that does not say something to me of the Sun of Righteousness. There is no created thing that does not say something to me of God who framed it. I sit on the hillside, in summer, and watch the spiders as they spin their webs, and the grasshoppers, as they leap over me, freshman-like, jumping first, and looking to see where they have landed afterwards; and the birds, as they skip from branch to branch, or fly from tree to tree. There is not an animal that distrusts me. I sit so still that the birds forget that I am there, and sing as they do not often sing when persons are near them; and the ants creep about me and on me; and I have a sense of the relationship of these things. There is nothing that grows — no weed, no grass, no flower, no fruit — that is not in some way related to God in my thoughts; and I am never so near him as when I am in the presence of his works, — as when, night or day, I am

in that solemn cathedral, the world of nature, and behold its ever-changing beauty. There are no such frescos in art as God's hand paints in the heavens. There are no such relations of God as come to us through nature. In the budding, blossoming days of spring, in the balmy days of summer, in the fruitful days of autumn, in the days of winter, in every day of the year, there is something which is a separate leaf to me in God's outside Bible, now that I have learned to read it. I owe more to Ruskin than to any theologian. Eyes I had, but I did not see; now I see marvelous things. Ears had I, but I did not hear; now I hear things that are wonderful beyond all conception. New realms in the universe of God have been disclosed to me through these things. They have been a source of unspeakable comfort to me; and from them I have derived a power of comforting other people in my preaching. I owe much, very much, to the fact that I have become, as it were, Hebraized, — that I have gone back and practiced upon the genius of that noble old stock who learned by a wise spiritualizing of things visible to discern the invisible God.

FOLLOW THE HEBRAIC SPIRIT, — NOT FORM.

There is another criticism that I would make, or caution that I would give, — namely, that in attempting to comfort yourselves, and in attempting to teach others to comfort themselves, in the recognition of the Divine Being, you must not be content simply to go over the names that are contained in the Old or the New Testament, or names that have been subsequently developed and become familiar, as descriptive of God.

The power of many of them has perished. To us the conception which is given of God by representing him as a lion is very little. The early significance of this representation is gone. Still more strongly is that the case with those names which made the hearts of the men of old thrill; as, for instance, when God was spoken of as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. These names are to me the names of three very noble and respectable personages, but not much more. I am not drawn to them by any affinity of race-stock. The thread which ran down from them was spun so long that it broke before it reached me. They are names which, though they are still used, produce but little effect. They are not names that take hold upon the feelings of people in the present day as more modern ones would do. I have heard men pray, "O God of Abraham," "O God of Isaac," "O God of Jacob," "O God of Zion"; but I never heard men pray, "O God of Brooklyn," "O God of America." I never heard anybody, in prayer, imitate the spirit, and not merely the outward form, of the Hebrews in this respect. When the old ante-Christ Christians prayed to God, they prayed out of their necessity, — a necessity which led them to give to the Divine nature such titles as we find in the Bible.

What does a mother say, when her child is sick, and she is in despair, and when it flashes on her mind that her first-born, her only child, that she never dreamed could be taken from her, is dying? How can she say, "O Lord Jehovah"? It would be *brutum fulmen.* Why does she not say, "O God of my dying babe"? That would bring him very near, in power. Why do

you not pray in the name of your father, in the name of your mother, and in the name of your town? In other words, when you pray, why do you not imitate, not externally but internally, those men who, when they went to God, appealed to him in the name of those things which were truest and most significant to *them?*

There is a God of men who are bankrupt; there is a God of men who are in prison; there is a God of men who are sinful, and who have been found out, and who are overwhelmed with distress; and why do not they take their title from their circumstances and experience? What an opener of the Divine nature to men it would be, if they would transfer that which they need in their peculiar exigencies to the care of God, who is all in all!

HOW TO REALIZE THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

It is in the way of which I have been speaking that we can form some conception of the Divine personality, or disposition and character of God. We rise up to it through a kind of anthropomorphism. By that means we come to the best notion of deity as a Being possessed of dispositions, and not of attributes simply.

Now, how can we make this conception ever-present with us? I have already hinted at the manner in which it may be done; but let me elaborate a few points more clearly.

NOT BY WILL-POWER.

We fail to make a conception of the Divine presence the result of volition only, or chiefly. Herein

lies the great trouble with people. They say, "You tell me that I must love God. I try to love him, and I love to vacuity. Though I try to love, there is no God that presents himself to my mind."

Did anybody ever talk to persons who were seeking to love God, that he did not meet with this difficulty? Is it not the universal experience in revivals, with persons who have been educated catechetically to abstract notions of God, and who have never been educated associationally in respect to the Divine nature, that when they undertake to evoke Jehovah by their will, there is no response? Although you, who are highly cultured, have, on other grounds, a usable conception of the Divine nature, and can evoke it, the great mass of your people cannot, when you describe it to them as it is usually presented in systems of theology.

NOT BY FIXED ARTIFICIAL SYMBOLS.

We must refuse to have a variety of religious symbols set apart to be the sole interpreters of God. Of course, those who have High-Church ears to hear must not hear what I am going to say now. I do not object at all to a man's surrounding himself with symbols; I believe in symbols; I believe that they are the very life and power of education; but I do protest against a man's building a church and putting a cross on it in order to get an association of God. I protest against forms and ceremonies being introduced into religious services for the purpose of fixing the minds of men on God. I protest against bringing out ministers in black and white, with the view of impressing upon men by these colors certain moral qualities. I protest against

turnings and twistings as signifying spiritual ideas. I protest against those artificial symbolizations which have been invented to represent great interior principles and facts.

Suppose I should take a match and strike a light and go and hold it in a corner, and look at it; suppose a man, observing me, should ask, "Mr. Beecher, what are you doing?" and I should say, "I am bringing to my mind a vivid conception of the sun!" Suppose a man who had been taught according to the old Hebrew method, that the morning sun comes from God, — that the tremulous dewy atmosphere of the early hours is the breath of God, — that the wind, which shakes the trees, and sighs through their branches, is of God, — that the perfumes of plants and flowers are caused by God, — that all creatures that live in the sea, on the earth, and in the air, are God's creations, — that all processes of nature are carried on under the inspiration of God, — that whatever is spread abroad throughout the universe is God's handiwork, — suppose this man to have a deep, grand sense of the Divine origin of all things; and then let him think of these little pickaninny symbols, stuck away in the corner of a church, as representing moral and spiritual ideas! It is the poverty of them, it is the meanness of them, it is the narrowness of them, it is their tendency to fetichism, that I object to, and not to the principle of symbolism itself.

BUT BY SEEING GOD IN EVERYTHING.

Take this principle, and use it like men touched with the Divine spirit, reaching up toward the Divine,

and dwelling in the realm where you recognize that the "heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his hand-work." There is where you should go for your symbols. There is where things have their true significance. Prosperity and adversity, life and death, joy and sorrow, friendships and dislikes or repulsions, — all these things come with significant meanings to the minds of men when they rise to that upper sphere.

If in that way it is a principle of your life, each day, and all the time, to make *everything* a suggestion of the Divine, you cannot be far from God; you will not have to go a great distance to find him; you will be in his presence without seeing him; he will be with you at the table, by the couch, in your walks, everywhere. All things that you look upon will bring to you some memory of him. The very air will be redolent with his influence. There will be no question as to how you shall bring him to you. You will live with him; you will live in him; "for in him we live, and move, and have our being."

Perhaps I cannot better close than by going back and reading to you the Hebrew's thought about this:—

"Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou has beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning,

and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me ; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee ; but the night shineth as the day : the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

V.

PRACTICAL USE OF THE DIVINE IDEAL.

February 26, 1874.

A PARADOX.

IN attempting to interpret to our people the knowledge of God, it is necessary, first, that the Divine nature should be unknowable, in order that it may be knowable; and then, that it should be known before it can be unknown, if you will excuse such a paradox as this.

IDOLATRY AND MYSTICISM.

The human mind longs for something which it can take hold of, and grasp by that part of itself which is most active, and in which its strength lies. This desire is the root of all idolatry. Idols are rude attempts of men to present to themselves a superior power by the use of those materials with which they are most familiar; and that root-desire is in itself right. Without it there would be no outreach toward God; without it the soul would not feel drawn or attracted heavenward. This is that which in the Scriptures is rebuked, — that men should attempt to frame a God for their senses, and out of themselves alone; and yet, since all knowledge on

our part, in its initial stages, must have relation to our own faculties, since we cannot understand anything that addresses itself to other faculties than those which we have, all our knowledge, in the beginning, must be of things visible, or of things easily cognizable; we must take known things. Being taken, however, they must be exalted, — they must be carried up so high that they cease to represent the weakness and the rudeness of the human element. This is the work of faith; or, in other words, the work of the imagination, acting philosophically with the higher intellectual and moral powers.

If you take the things which are known, and frame them into divinity just as you know them, and into such a divinity as shall stand on the level with your knowledge, you have an idol. If you take the conceptions which go to make the Divine nature, and employ abstractions of mere philosophical ideas, then you come into the realm of mysticism, or the realm of pure ideality, that is as barren of power as idolatry itself, — certainly as barren of any power for good.

THE KNOWN RAISED TO THE UNKNOWN.

So, then, the operation through which the human mind goes, in the construction of its conception of God, is that of taking things with which it is acquainted, and forming that conception by thought, by accumulation, by various means, until it is all irradiated by imagination, and under the Divine inspiration, — which I believe not to be local or special, but universal, in everything that lifts a man above the animal condition, and belonging to all time, as well as to all men who

think of moral ideas and the higher forms of intellectual truth.

Under this inspiration, — or, if I may so say, under the stimulus of the Sun of Righteousness, — these elements of knowledge with which we commence must be lifted up into that sphere where we can begin to assign to them infinity, — and to INFINITY there can be no absolute meaning other than that of illimitable and immeasurable extent or intensity. These qualities, whose germ-forms are in our knowledge, must be raised into a sphere in which the imagination conceives of them as literally presenting the utmost measures which human experience can apply in respect to quality and quantity, — and then recognizing their still vaster range.

So we take time-elements, and frame a conception of the Divine Being out of them. But then, before we have completed that conception it must have entered into the realm of eternity, and our God must transcend anything that the human mind can conceive of. In pre-existence and in continued existence he is exalted immeasurably above animal life, above human life, above race-life, passing all the analogies or facts with which we began. We lift up into the heaven that which, when once lifted up, is as much higher than the elements with which we set out, as the clouds that hang gorgeous in the sky, or are glorified at evening, are higher than the particles of vapor when they first begin to ascend from puddle, pool, or stream.

THE SENSE OF INFINITY, A MORAL POWER.

It is this thought that familiarly springs, and must spring, from your knowledge, but that must not stop

there, nor take its limits there, — that must be carried up into the infinite and the eternal, — it is this thought that will have much to do, by and by, in your work of the ministry; for you are to do for individual men from the pulpit, in the course of a few years, that which historically has been done for the race through periods of thousands of years. In other words, the great problem of the evolution of moral truth is to be enacted over again, — only it is to be done in briefer and still briefer periods. If you are a minister, you are appointed, in some sense, to be a Providence to your people, and to do in a short space of time what in earlier periods was done through the lives of nations and of the race. So, then, when we have begun with things known, we are to carry the idea of God as far away from known things as we can. In that way we get power; and otherwise there would be no power.

The infinity of God, in all its attributes, — the eternity of God, — the self-existence of God, — you may be able to carry your people back along the line of thought respecting these things until they pant for breath; there is a certain moral dynamic result, sometimes, by which men are so overcome in the contemplation of the eternity and self-existence of God, that they almost gasp at the thought of it. Yet it is not necessary that there should be a distinct intellectual perception of these things, in order to get the impression of them.

Thus it is also in regard to the universalness of God's presence, of his absolute supremacy, and of his omnipotent power; and in these later days, when we have a more perfect understanding of created things, the prob-

lem of Divine ease in the management of the universe is increased in difficulty of conception; and the thought that one Being can have personal care over that which we know and are all the time finding out to be the universe is rendered harder of conception.

Science is unpacking a particular part of the universe, and showing its infinite riches and variety and depth and complexity. All elements that go to make science so wonderful now are reacting in their turn, and are making that Divine Center, who is the Father and Controller of these elements, still more wonderful.

It seems to me that the idea of God has but dawned, and that we are to have further and further revelations respecting him. I believe, however, not that the new will slough off the old, or supersede the old, but simply that, as in a stately tree, branch after branch, or as in the pine, whorl after whorl, makes all that there was more noble and grander, so upon the basis of knowledge, actual and real, there is to be development after development, through ages, which will give a perception of God that prophets may now discern dimly, but that we do not see.

DANGER OF THE INFINITE IDEAL.

When you have presented this thought of God to your people; when to their imagination you have filled it full of power and wonderfulness; when you have made them feel that God is, in the heaven, and over the heaven, the Master of time and of eternity, the Indweller of the invisible, the Forth-putter of all phenomena; when you have raised before them an immense conception of the Divine power and grandeur

and majesty and fullness and glory, — there will be danger of their being without a God. He will be so large, and he will live in conditions so different from theirs, that they will be liable to lose him.

THE UNKNOWABLE REDUCED TO THE KNOWABLE.

Now, therefore, you must bring back again from the unknowable to the knowable, those whose imaginations are tremulous with the impressions of the Divine which you have made upon them. You must lead them back from those depths to which you have carried them, by opening to them God's righteousness and his paternal government, and by making them sure of the truth of a Providence, particular and minute.

I would as soon die as live, if I thought the network of natural law which is being woven now was to take away my faith of prayer, and my faith of a Providence, personal and especial. With the destruction of the doctrine of such a Providence, and of the conception of prayer, everything, to me, would be destroyed. Deprive me of these things, and you deprive me of that on which my hope rests. Without them I should be as an atom floating in space, out of the reach of any sympathy.

You need to bring near to your people that God the conception of whom you have builded and magnified in their hearts, so that they shall feel that he is theirs. Point out to me a man whom all the world is talking about, who is surrounded by crowds of admirers, whose step in the nation makes it tremble, and who is influential and great, — point out to me such a man, and though I admire him too, I stand in awe of him, and

am afraid to approach him ; but tell me, "That man is your own father," and then the more there is of him the better it is for me, because he is mine.

You have taken poor, humble elements, and constructed a God, and carried him up into infinities and eternities and sovereignties and grandeurs, that are indispensable to the conception in the imagination of men ; but if you leave men shivering so far below that their sun has not beams long enough to reach them, they die, chilled and summerless.

God, after he has been thus exalted, is to be brought back to the comprehension of men in various ways, and particularly through that grandest of channels, Jesus Christ, as I shall show when I come to speak of him.

For, through him God has been brought near by a sense of his paternity in government ; by a sense of reality in providence; by a feeling that men partake, through sympathy, of the capacity of the Divine nature to endure suffering, — not the suffering of the weak, not physical suffering, not the suffering that overtaxes the powers, but that suffering which belongs to love, and without which we can hardly conceive of a faithful friend or a truly noble being, — the very antithesis of the Greek conception, which attempted to make God as perfect as marble, until he was little more than a marble statue, having a very slight relation to life, and being without a throb of affection.

USE OF THE IMAGINATION.

It is, then, the known carried up into the unknown that develops the power over men of the Divine nature. First, it develops power of imagination. Theologians

are accustomed to speak of the imagination as though a taint rested upon it, because it has been so generally employed in connection with the merely beautiful. We think of it as an embellishment of art, or as that which has in it the key of art. It has to do with the beautiful that poetry largely deals in. It has to do with ornamentation of rhetoric or oratory. It has to do with grace of movement, with symmetry of form, and with harmony of color. But while the imagination certainly has these sensuous functions, it has also, and pre-eminently, a higher function. It works with the intellect; with the philosophical side of the mind; with those faculties which take in things that are not embodied to the senses; with the sense of reason; with that which some people say *intuates*, or thinks by inspiration, — whatever you choose to call it in your philosophy. It is that quality of the mind by which a man, through his reason, is enabled to take in the conception of things which do not present themselves to the senses. As the Apostle (or whoever wrote the epistle to the Hebrews; it was not Paul, I will vouch!) defines it, it is the "evidence of things not seen." It is that conviction which springs up in the mind, of the reality of things which the senses cannot prove.

It is by the carrying up of the known into the realm of the unknowable that men's imaginations are quickened, and by long dwelling in that realm that they may be sanctified.

It is of vital importance that this quality be awakened among your people. I do not believe that anybody can be a Christian who has not imagination enough to say and to feel, "Our Father who art in

heaven," — not in any house, not anywhere on earth, but in heaven. What other thing in men can climb the ladder clear up to heaven but imagination? How can a man stand and tell or ask all the world to rejoice at things not seen, through any other faculty than the imagination?

There is a form of religion that may be a hinderance; but there is another form that is quickening, that is vitalizing, that is indispensable; and there is nothing that develops it more than the presentation of a conception of the Divine Being made up of noble elements carried to such an exaltation that they transcend knowledge, so that the mind goes feeling, feeling, feeling after God.

As in those vastest palaces in Europe, such as the Louvre, one wanders from hall to hall and from room to room, until his feet are weary, and he is amazed and lost in the multitude of apartments, so, when one explores the nature of God, however familiar he may be with the elemental truths of it, he goes on and on, and apartment after apartment opens before him, until his mind is lost; but it is not lost in the sense of being staggered. It is a being lost which vitalizes. The sense is prodigious of the magnitude of such a Being.

THE HUMBLING OF SELF-ESTEEM.

When the imagination has taken hold of the view of the immensity, the power, the righteousness, and the glory of God, both physically and morally, it is through this faculty, and almost only through it, that the natural conceit which is found in very many men can be legitimately met and put down. "There is more hope of a

fool" than of "a man wise in his own conceit," we are told by the cynical king of old. I think the hardest thing to do, in this world, is to put down a man who has large self-esteem, and who is constitutionally proud.

The men of old, who shook the world, were made up in that way. The men who occupy important places, and stand as pivots on which great events move, must be made up of good stuff. They must have confidence in themselves, and they must be certain of their convictions. They must be men who are not easily broken or bent. And yet their conceit is to be taken out of them, and their pride needs to be humbled. But there is nothing that I know of which can ever bring such natures down, except a sense of God that shall make their own littleness overpowering to them.

A man with large self-esteem, looking at a great thinker or one capable of great feeling, may say, "That man knows more than I do"; but the distance or disproportion between them is not such as to overwhelm him. It is only by such a man's comparing his own power with omnipotence that he can be humbled. It is true that a man may be cudgeled into humility by misfortunes, or by abuse; but under such circumstances his power will be broken, and he will resemble flax that has been retted in the dew, and then broken in a brake, and then heckled, and then spun and woven. A man may be beaten by his contact with society so that he shall become listless; or so that, according to the familiar saying, he shall *have the starch taken out of him*. He may be humbled, but he has lost power in the operation. There is a sense, however, in which a

man may be thoroughly humbled, and yet maintain all the vitality, all the lunge, all the push, that there is in strong self-esteem.

When Job was assailed by his comforters, (Heaven help a man who has such comforters!) he battled against the whole of them, and did it bravely, and successfully, too; but when God came into the controversy, and opened sphere after sphere of knowledge, and with wonderful kindness said, "Where wert thou when I thought, and where wert thou when I created?" and made the heaven and the earth to pass before Job, then it was that Job said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself."

It is only by a sense of God vitalized, radiant, burning, that the pride of character, which has in it so much power and usefulness, can be brought into that mood of humility which shall make it as sweet as it is strong.

Paul went through the same experience. He said, "I was alive without the law once [by 'law' here is meant the revelation of the will of God, and the measure of the Divine ideal, which is given to man]; but when the law came, sin revived, and I died." He was death-struck at the view.

GROWTH OF AN UNDERSTANDING OF CHRIST.

I have said that this brings down conceit, and humbles a man. I go further: I say that this conception, beginning in known things, and going up into the realm of the unknown, and then coming back to the sphere of familiar knowledge, is an indispensable pre-

requisite to an intelligent and large conception of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God manifest in the flesh. For you must remember that it was not until the "fullness of the times" that Christ came. There was an order in the development of the world; and it is not said in so many words, but it is implied, and the facts show that it was not until the full development of the character of God, as it is made known in the Old Testament, that the distinctive qualities which Christ brought to light and evinced in his life could be fully appreciated. For example, every man, I think, before he can understand meekness and gentleness and sweetness and forgivingness in any person, must understand the magnitude and the power of that person. The events, the interpretations, and the applications in government of the Divine nature and attributes, in the Old Testament, have no parallel in the New Testament, — not even in the Apocalypse. That supreme work of the Divine nature which Christ came to interpret and to illustrate, and which must precede the believing of the Lord Jesus Christ, is delineated in the Old Testament Scriptures as it is delineated nowhere else. All the elements of spiritual truth which are revealed respecting God in the New Testament have their first germinant form in the Old Testament.

THE NEW TESTAMENT SEEN THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT.

I do not know where in the New Testament you can find any such dramatic and soul-shaking representations of God as were made to Moses; as were made to the Prophet on the side of the mountain where he had

fied; as were made in the later prophecies, — for instance, those of Isaiah and Jeremiah; and as were made in the Book of Job, — the mightiest drama ever written, and one which leaves all other dramas poor and pulseless in the comparison. I know not where else you can find any such description of the glory, the largeness, the infinity, and the eternity of the Divine nature as is contained in the Old Testament. You certainly cannot find it in the Gospels. You can find it only to a slight degree, if at all, in the Epistles. The Apocalypse is pictorial, opalescent, and wonderful; but if you search you will find that most of its figures and its sublimest scenes are but reproductions from the Old Testament, — that they were found in the Old Jewish Scriptures in one form or another before they were put into the drapery of that wonderful later book.

Every man, therefore, should go to the New Testament through the Old Testament, either actually or virtually. If he reads and accepts the representations of the Divine nature and government as they are found in the Old Testament, then he goes to the New Testament as through an open door, or an illuminated passage-way. And to one who goes to the New Testament thus, there is great power in Christ.

Gentleness in Him that delivered the law upon Sinai is gentleness indeed. There is nothing so gentle as the touch of one who is dying of exhaustion; but gentleness under such circumstances is weakness, and is as nothing. There is nothing more common than the relf-renunciation of a man who cannot help himself. There is nothing in the world so empty as virtue when

a person does not care what he has done, and would just as lief have done one thing as another. Benevolence, where it is only absolute indifference to moral quality, is very easily understood, and is very cheap. But when God is represented, in the grandeur of his power, as One who is controlling the universe for the upbuilding of a future kingdom; as One who loves righteousness; as One who stands forever, saying, "I am patient with sin, I am long-suffering, I am full of kindness, and rather than that men should suffer, I suffer"; as One in whom leniency and meekness are attributes of thunderous power, of universal unobstructed government, of sovereignty and majesty, — then these elements have a meaning which they could not have, standing simply and only by themselves.

Thus Jesus Christ sprouts out of the Old Testament; Messiah is a blossom of the God of the old Hebrews; and you need to see the stem and the leaves, as well as the blossom. The salient familiar traits of Christ do not receive illustration, and have not power with men, unless they are shown upon a background of the unknowable, — that is, of God, in such transcendent condition, extent, and altitude, as passes knowledge.

You will find this same thing exemplified in the New Testament; as, for instance, where our Saviour, wishing to teach that lesson which is most fundamental, slowest to be learned, and most easily forgotten, knowing that he came from God, and went to God again, took a towel, and girded himself, and washed the disciples' feet. For Peter or John to put a towel around him, and wash the feet of his fellow-disciples, though it would have been something, to be sure, would have

been a very small matter; but for the Master to stand in the full glow and consciousness of his everlasting divinity, and do it, was a very significant thing. The humiliation, standing on the ground of Divine consciousness, was most powerful.

So you find in Philippians the statement that "Christ, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; *but* made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." You see, in this case, that the humiliation on the part of Christ was voluntary, and that it was over against a sense that he was very God. Another similar instance is that which is recorded in the opening of Hebrews, where it is said, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Here, over against that consciousness of justice which existed in the Jewish nation, Christ is evermore depicted. And the subtle, unconscious influence of these antithetical passages lies in the philosophical ground which I have been attempting to illustrate.

REFLECTED LIGHT.

In view of the statement that everybody must virtually come to the New Testament through the Old, you may ask me, "Do you not believe that a Christianly bred child in these days when the Old Testament is less read and taught than it used to be, a child that has received instruction in the New Testament

alone, and has been taught what is right and what is wrong, what is virtuous and what is unvirtuous, is salvable, and may enter the kingdom of heaven?" Undoubtedly I do; because, although the child is imperfectly educated, the Old Testament is not left out. It is in the mother, and the child gets it.

Reflected light is a thousand times more than direct light. Direct light is the most brilliant; but yet, in every forest, under every rock, behind every house, everywhere, there are gradations of reflected light.

Not only does the truth of God exist positively and directly in this world, but it is reflected in a thousand ways. There are truths of God that come out of laws, out of institutions, out of manners and customs in Christianly bred communities; there is a truth of God that comes out of men's characters, that have been incarnated and embalmed; and you get a secondary light of truth where you do not get the first downfall of the light of truth. And so the child of Bible-trained parents may be educated to know God through Christ Jesus without having read a word of the Old Testament.

POWER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Many parents do not dare to let their children go to the Old Testament. They say there are in it many things that shock the refinement of modern Christians, and that they do not want their children to see. There are, it is true, many things in the history of the race which are not agreeable; so there are many things in the growth of every child that are not agreeable; and we take him off to the nursery, and do not show him in the parlor; but they are necessary parts of life,

though they do not belong to polite society. And there are parts of the Old Testament which do not belong to polite literature; but they belong to life, notwithstanding. Life has knots and twists in it which must be taken account of in a true delineation. Old Cromwell wanted to be painted with the wart on his face; the Old Testament paints the warts on the faces of its heroes.

Now, if parents are fastidious about the Old Testament, the consequence is that their children are weakened, unless they get its reflected light, — and then they are not half so strong as they would otherwise be. I would rather take my child by the hand, and walk with him right straight through from Genesis to the last book of the Old Testament, and read every bit to him, unfolding and explaining it, than to have him deprived of the power which comes from familiarity with it, — all the time keeping before his mind the thread of moral principle which runs through it; for there is not more certainly a spinal cord that runs down to the lumbar vertebræ than there is a magnificent idea of God running right through the Old Testament from beginning to end, — of a God known, but unknowable; of a God righteous, and seeking to build up righteousness in his creatures; of a God administering reward and penalty; of a God inspiring love and fear. And having opened up the sweet encouragement and hope which are so abundantly to be found in the Old Testament, I would then open up the New Testament view of God's interior disposition, as made manifest through the Lord Jesus Christ.

I beseech of you, do not be ashamed of the Old Testament. If you are ashamed of it, God grant that you may suffer persecution; for I do not think a man ever suffered persecution, and fought bravely against it, that he did not take refuge in the Old Testament. It came out of storms, and it is helpful to men who are in the midst of storms. There is bone in it, — bone that has flesh and skin on it, and that is clothed with beauty. It is a wilderness; there are some rudenesses in it, to be sure, but these rudenesses were unavoidable, and they were not without some use.

The Old Testament is wonderful in many ways, — wonderful in its growths, wonderful in its visions, wonderful in its total effect; and it is indispensable as a background to the New Testament.

As mountains would be undesirable to live in, but as, nevertheless, they are fathers of all the streams that make the level plain sweet and beautiful, so the Old Testament, though it contains some things which are not attractive, is the source of those truths which run into the New Testament, and make it fertile.

SACREDNESS OF THE NAME OF GOD.

Now, in preaching, let me say first, do not fritter away power or reverence, by a tripping use of the Divine name. I am not reverential except through one or two faculties. Reverence in me is an auxiliary element. It is merely subordinate to others. I revere anything that is beautiful. I revere Christ more than I do Jehovah. This is my infirmity. Therefore I make a personal equation when I study the subject

of divinity, knowing that I shall be deficient on that side, and endeavor to make up the deficiency. But even *I* cannot endure the theological familiarity with the name of God which so largely prevails among ministers.

Mr. Arnold says that men talk of God as though he were a neighbor just around the corner, that everybody knew all about. It is shocking to me.

The Hebrews had a name which they never mentioned. This was true not only of them, but of many outlying nations. They had periphrastic words or terms which they used for expressing the unpronounceable name of God. As they drew near to it, undoubtedly it threw a sort of shadow upon them, and veneration was excited in their bosom by it.

Well, that is a trait of human nature. If you observe, you will see that the things which to you are the dearest, the noblest, the most precious, are the things which you are the least likely to speak of. Hence the most exquisite thoughts of love are those which are never uttered. You shrink from uttering them. It is not shame that prevents your speaking of them, but a reason of nature which God put in you, and they lie deep and unpronounced. There are many natures, fit to be angel-natures, that would die rather than speak of things in them that it is their glory to possess. And there is an application of this to the way in which God should be preached.

God is my heavenly Father. I used to take liberties with my earthly father, but I took liberties with him only so far, and in some things; and it was all the more sweet because there was a background in him

that I never took liberties with. This always, as it were, gave me a sense of the strength and the treasure that I had in him.

The very name of God ought to be sacred.

THE PREACHER'S CONCEPTION OF GOD TO BE PRACTICAL.

In the development of the Divine nature, do not always — do not ever, except in your study — stand at God's center and work out from that: stand at the soul's center; for it is not your calling to attempt to construct a Divine conception, except for its uses. The knowledge of the Divine nature which you gather is to be employed as the bread of life, as medicine for the soul; and, therefore, in the interpretation of the Divine nature, while you may make yourselves strong and wise by standing at the center of the Divine, and then logically balancing attribute and quality with facts of being; while as an exercise, and as a preparation, that may be allowable; and while, sometimes, in that part of your ministry where you are instructing your congregation on grounds that are to constitute the foundation of some view, you may delineate from the Divine center; yet, mainly, you are physicians, called to prescribe for the wants of men, to eradicate the bad and develop the good in them; and therefore your teaching in regard to the Divine nature must be largely relative to human necessity. This is an important element in preaching.

What is fundamental in theology is not necessarily essential to a practical conception of the Divine nature; for many things are indispensable in the construction of a system which are not at all indispensable in the

recovery of a soul. Predestination is the central point in the scheme of Calvinism; knock that point out, and you cannot hold this system together; but revivals will spring up, and men will be converted and become Christians, without ever having heard of that doctrine. It is necessary for a certain logical development of an idea or a philosophy, but it is not necessary as a curative process for the depraved heart.

You are to bear in mind that you cannot develop the whole of the Divine nature. You can form a generic conception of God, and you are to do it; and then you are to take part after part of that generic idea, and adapt it to the wants of men.

That is the example of the Old Testament; it is pre-eminently the example of the New Testament; and, whether their theory be that or not, it is the example of men in their employment of the knowledge of God for the recovery of souls from sin to righteousness. Human want, man's need, therefore, must decide how the Divine nature should be preached.

SYMMETRICAL PREACHING.

This determines a question about which there has been a great deal of confusion of thought, namely, the question of proportion of truth, or, in other words, of symmetry of view. People sometimes say of a man who preaches under the inspiration of human life, "He is a good minister, but he preaches all on one side." There are theologians who preach under the inspiration of a system of truth, and not under the inspiration of human life; who are all the time afraid that something will happen to batter that system in

on this side, or pull it out on that side; who, if they preach one view one Sunday, think, for no reason in creation than because they preached that view, that next Sunday they must preach the view which is its natural antithesis; and who thus go on preaching around the ribs of an imaginary system, to keep it from being lopsided.

Now, in the first place, you do not know enough to do it; nor do any others know enough to do it; and more's the pity if they think they do. The power of developing the Divine nature in its universal forms is not given to us; and nowhere else is this more positively declared (to the shame of arrogant thinkers and teachers) than in the Bible itself. You cannot yet tell all that there is in the Divine nature; and until you can, you cannot make a symmetrical, center-poised view of God. You can develop as much of the Divine nature as is adapted to man, or as much as is relative to his want; but even that part that is tangible, or comprehensible, or within the horizon of faith, is to be used in due proportions: not, however, on account of any imaginary dignity which there is in theology, nor because of any fear that you will pain God. I do not think God cares very much for your sermons anyhow; but he does care for men's souls. I suspect that he cares more for that end of the church than he does for this end, — though there is a difference of opinion on that subject.

When my ministry was in the West, what did I find? A loose and heterogeneous mass of men who had come from everywhere, — a detritus from the stream of emigration. As at the Delta of the Mississippi is gath-

ered refuse which floats down from the region above, so in the West were gathered human beings from almost every nation on the globe; and there the principle of individualism was the predominant one. I insisted upon the sanctity of the Sabbath day; I insisted upon the absolute necessity of churches, and of church forms; and I insisted upon the indispensableness of authority, and of obedience to that authority. I preached Sunday after Sunday against individualism, and in favor of association.

By and by I was transferred to the East; and there I found society hard-ribbed, vigorous. Men were lopped off on every side, to make them fit into crowded populations. Society was tyrannical. And ever since I came East I have fought society, and tried to get individual men to be free, independent, and large.

I was right both times. I did not care for abstract theories. My object was to get *men*. When, by reason of their condition, they needed one side of truth, I kept pouring that side of truth on them. Not that I neglected instructively to bring up other sides of truth; but I made predominant that side which they were most in need of. The instrument with which I molded them was adapted to the state which they were in. In the West I tried to bring men together in collective bodies for the sake of developing more power and better fruit; and in the East I tried to get men out of their Pharisaism, so that they might breathe freer, and, like trees that stand in the open field, grow broader, throwing out side-branches, and developing the glory of society.

Now, if I had to study the proportions of a philoso-

phy, I should probably study in such a way that I would save my philosophy, but lose my men.

Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, when you want to do anything with promiscuous, common people, you are obliged to exaggerate. If you take one needle and push it into a round ball of yarn you have no difficulty in making it go through; but if a man says, "It is not fair to take one needle alone, here is the whole paper, they must all have a chance," and puts them into the ball, and pushes them, together they are as blunt as the handle of a chisel. Fifty needles pushed in a bunch do not prick anybody. And if you say, "Now I am going to preach the doctrine of God's moral nature; but then, I am going to define it, and explain it, so as to take away all possible ground of objection," you will produce no impression. You will try to maintain your central truth or system, without any regard to the salvation of men.

You bear down on conscience in such a way that every man in your congregation understands what you mean, and is affected by your discourse; but an old instructed man says, "Well, yes, that was true; but then, it was exaggerated." Of course it was. What does a microscope do but exaggerate? What does any one of our tentative processes do but exaggerate? Exaggeration is often necessary where certain effects are to be produced.

In malarial districts they give men quinine; and if they were to act on the principle that there must be a symmetrical system supported, on the principle that medicine must be administered proportionally, having given a dose of quinine, they would have to give a cor-

responding dose of something else to balance it. Is that the way the medical practice is carried on? Who cries for symmetry in *medicine?* Symmetry in *health* is what we want.

VARIATIONS OF PREACHING.

One class of persons in your congregations will require one kind of treatment, and another class will require another kind of treatment; and they should be made to understand that, whatever system you employ, or whatever mode of presentation you employ, you employ it with reference to the welfare of the souls of men.

If, for instance, a company of poor, ignorant servant-girls, who are perceptive, who are sensuous in their nature, that is, live by things seen and felt; who act according to rules and regulations; who fulfill their duties by hours ticked off on the clock, doing first this thing, then that thing, and then that, — if such a company of servant-girls should come into your congregation, you must conform your teaching to the state which they are in; only, it must always aim at carrying them a stage higher. You must go down to them, — not to stay with them; not to encourage them to stay where they are; not to treat them as if they could not be carried higher; but to lift them up. You must minister to their want in such a way as to raise them from one elevation to another; and they will take in more truth and more truth, until they become well versed in those things which pertain to their interest as immortal beings.

If you go into a congregation of men who are educated in commerce, you must adapt your preaching to

their biases, and use terms with which they are familiar; only, in adapting yourself to their biases you must see to it that you lead them into another and a larger sphere of thought and life. You cannot deal with humble folks (who are humble by nature), you cannot deal with limber-backed, willowy folks, as you can with old, tough, sturdy men. Why, there will be men in your congregations on whose minds storms of truth will fall like dews on an alligator's back, and what are you going to do with such men?

There is a time for preaching damnation. There are moods and states in dealing with which the element of fear is indispensable.

I would not thank anybody to go with a prairie plow and six yoke of oxen into my garden or on to my farm, among my shrubs and trees, and roots and flowers; and yet, if I had a fresh piece of prairie land, wire-bound and rooted a foot deep, nothing but that plow and those oxen would rip through it and turn it bottom-side up.

There are times and circumstances in which the fear element is indispensable, and people seem to think that because at such times and under such circumstances you ply the dormant senses, and strike through the thick hide with fear, therefore you must always do it.

Men say to a minister, "Ah! I remember what soul-stirring sermons you preached when you were in the country; and do not you remember how you brought in those old sinners? but you have given up preaching such sermons now." Well, if a man was in the same place, and remained in the same state, he ought to be preached to in the same way; but he ought to change,

and come to a higher plane of development, and need different preaching.

I hold that the nearer men live to matter, the more sensuous must be the representations which are made to them. In other words, they cannot understand anything which does not approximate to their nature. It is right to bear down upon men with the lower forms of revelation of the Divine government when it is necessary, but only when it is necessary. It is not right to carry the blazing torch of hell-fire all the way through your ministrations just out of respect to a doctrine.

The nobler elements of the human soul are those which, when they behold beauty, recognize it; and when they behold right, accept it. If you can bring men up to that state in which they are cultivated morally, and in which they can be made to accept the higher way from the noblest motives, that is the better and the truer course. If you cannot do that, fall back and see if you cannot take them on the next lower range. If you fail there, take them on the next lower if you can. Thus keep going down till you find where they can be reached. Your preaching should be such as to arouse men wherever they are. And its character must be determined by what you want to accomplish. Do not pour down rain and hail where smiles would be better. Do not use the double fist when the wave of welcome would be better. Act with intelligence in these respects.

HUMAN NEED, THE PREACHER'S GUIDE.

I find no more incompatibility in the ministries of men, between a belief in a great and terrible future, in

darkness, in desperate sorrows, in awful catastrophes, such as it makes the soul quiver to think of, — I find no more incompatibility or inconsistency between this belief and a belief in the love of Christ that breathed on Calvary, than I do between the declarations of Sinai and the declarations of Calvary. But this I think: that the ministry which develops any one side of the Divine character always and everywhere, whether it be the highest or the lowest side, relatively, without a consideration of its uses, is an imperfect ministry; and that, in delineating the Divine nature and the Divine government, when you come to administer that which you know, you must stand at the center of the human soul; you must be a man among men; you must weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice; you must know your people so as to be able to meet their want. Sometimes it will be tonic, and sometimes it will be diluent, that they need; sometimes it will be courage and hope, and sometimes it will be an influence which shall counteract presumption and overweening confidence. Go to the inexhaustible armory of God, and bring back and serve out to the people those armaments which shall make the weak strong, and the strong stronger, and by which even the babes shall be nourished into a true Christian manhood.

VI.

THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST.

February 27, 1874.

I HAVE, for the last three lectures, spoken on the subject of the Divine Nature; and more particularly as it is developed in the Old Testament Scriptures, or by our reflection on its relations to nature and government. This afternoon I wish to speak of that manifestation of the Divine nature which is in Jesus Christ.

There was in the life of the Saviour as regular a development, both external and internal, as ever takes place in the life of any man. Coming into the world, and assuming the human condition, he passed through it from the beginning to the end. He "grew in stature." He "increased in wisdom." Not simply did he pass as by name into human conditions, but he partook of human life. When he entered upon the ministry he was a teacher of morals and of piety. He had in himself qualities which belonged aforetime to the old Hebrew teachers, and much that was in common with the best Rabbis of his time.

CHRIST'S PERSONALITY THE CENTER OF HIS INSTRUCTION.

But there was one distinguishing element which appeared early, which grew more and more emphatic, and which at last showed that it was the very center of all his instruction; and that was that he himself, in his own personal life and being, was the Truth, and that all other truth, higher or lower, had its validity in faith in him, on the part of those who heard him.

He was unlike any other teacher. No prophet had ever yet said, after instructing his people: "All this knowledge ripens and receives its true genius in you, when you fall in love with me." No Apostle, illuminated as they had been by Christ's teaching, ever dared to say, after the most eloquent expositions of truth: "I am the center of my own argument." And no teacher since, in the philosophic schools, or in the moral and religious schools, has ever presumed to approach such a thought as this. It is unique. It stands absolutely alone among the utterances of sane men. In fantasies and insanities there is sometimes such an exorbitant element of self-esteem, that men think themselves to be Divine; but that is a morbid phenomenon which no man, as an acknowledged leader among men, sane in body and sane in mind, ever introduced into his teaching. This personal element, this claim by a teacher that his teaching took hold of men for good by reason of their personal adherence to him, was never put forth previous to the time of Christ.

It would sound very strange to you if I were to say, "Now, such of you as love me will understand what I

have said"; and yet that was the teaching of the Saviour all through his life. "I am the Light"; "I am the Bread that came down from heaven"; "Believe in me," were his injunctions. His sovereignty was always calm and serene; and as the center of his teaching, above everything else, was this command: "Believe in me." He stood for everything. It was out of belief in him, or, better, out of personal relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, that were to grow all the phenomena he taught and preached, and which men needed.

If you find, on searching the New Testament, that this is the truth in Christ Jesus, it is very plain that whatever method you may employ in preaching Christ, God's anointed, that element must determine the collateral modes; and the direction and general tendency of your teaching must be to bring men into a personal recognition of Christ, and into an actual, positive soul-relation to him. You have preached superficially if you have given knowledge merely; you have preached thoroughly and truly only when you have given life in him. That is the test, or should be, of pastoral orthodoxy, — one's capacity, one's aptitude to bring the souls who are committed to his charge into personal love-relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This, then, is the beginning, the foundation, the substructure, of every true gospel ministry.

To preach Christ, however, is something more than laboring with the souls of men, though that will be a part of it. There must be presented a conception of Christ. There must be enkindled in men's minds an idea of personality; and in some way it must be brought near to them.

CHRIST TO BE PRESENTED HISTORICALLY.

Now, in doing this, we are to bring home to men the biography, the life, — the historical life, — of Christ. For, although the spiritual juncture of the Divine nature and the human is the end of your ministry, one of the educating ways of inculcating that is by a more perfect representation to your people of Christ as he existed on earth. And in this regard it seems to me that the geographical and the archæological elements, the chronological arrganement of events, the whole psychological delineation of the period in which Christ lived, may very fitly enter into the preacher's plan much more largely than in the olden times.

I think that men discuss disproportionately the doctrines of divinity, and the historical elements of Christ's life not enough. I speak from reminiscences of my own childhood. In modern days the study of the character of Christ is becoming far more general and searching than it used to be. Within the past fifty years there have been some hundred biographies written of the Lord Jesus Christ, showing the drift of men's minds on this subject; and no ministry can hereafter be a fruitful and instructive one, according to the wants of the times, that neglects this great field of investigation.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CHRONOLOGICAL ACCURACY.

There will be difficulties in this work. There are so many questions connected with the matter of incarnation, — of the Divine nature brought into human conditions; there are so many other points of controversy in the New Testament, particularly in the structure of

the Gospels ; there is so much in this undertaking that refines, or perplexes, or does both, that it is not an easy matter to investigate.

For example, whichever Gospel you take to make out the mere order of events, you convict the other Gospels of irregularity. There is no harmony between them, and no possibility of making them harmonize. Their discrepancies are the despair of all harmonists, if I may so call them.

Elicott uses some such illustration as this : if you take the order of events, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, in Luke, and then take those same events in Matthew, they will appear there as one, five, three, seven, four, two, eight, six, ten, nine, — and so of the other Evangelists. The order of time cannot be established through them.

These, however, are superficial matters. Their connection is lost. All the circumstances need not be similarly stated in respect to time. Conceive, for instance, of eight or ten, or, to make the numbers alike, four old men who were acquainted with New Haven fifty or a hundred years ago, and imagine their giving their remembrances of President Dwight. One story calls out another. One man relates some circumstance, and that reminds another man of some other reminiscence. They go on giving anecdote after anecdote, and discourse after discourse; and the order in which they are given is the order of association, and not the order of time. Their statements are not chronologically arranged. Now, the four Gospels are a collection of memorabilia. The various incidents are put down, sometimes in the order of time, and sometimes not.

Sometimes they are gathered into groups by their apparent connection with each other.

So the want of a chronological arrangement of the facts renders your study of the life of Christ from the text somewhat difficult; but it does not take away from its profitableness. Nor would the mere possession of such an arrangement of itself make your preaching efficacious. You might make a complete biographical statement of the life of Christ in time, and in his relation to history and archæology at large; you might, in a course of lectures on the philosophy prevalent in Palestine at the time of his advent, describe the then state of the schools, and give the whole history of the conception of Christ, of his birth, of his childhood, of his development into manhood, and of his entrance into the ministry, following him, fact by fact, all through his life, and illustrating it at every step, and yet never preach Christ so that your people would come into near relations to him. You might delineate Christ and his career as you would Cæsar and his campaigns, making him a man and a marvel, without enkindling any feeling of personal relationship to him in the minds of men, without stirring up in them any enthusiasm respecting him, and without awaking in their souls any sense of spiritual want and supply.

So, then, while to preach Christ thus is a very important part of your work, it may be said, as a general thing, to be only a preliminary, preparatory part of it.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY.

Next, it may be thought that Christ is preached to men when his divinity is set forth to them, and when

the claims of that divinity are urged among them. Let me not be understood as undervaluing the textual battle, when I say the text is the weakest of all the elements in the proof of the divinity of Christ; although there have been times when that form of proof predominated over almost every other. In my judgment, the preponderance of the evidence of the text is unquestionably very largely in favor of the divinity of Christ. But to me the mere textual affirmations of it — what may be called the exterior proofs which go to substantiate it — amount to comparatively very little, simply because the other forms of evidence by which it is proved are overwhelming, so that I do not need these. But I am considering it in its abstract relation to the wants of the congregations in which you will minister. There are very many persons to whom the whole inward meaning of the washing of the disciples' feet (which is one of the proofs, to my mind, of Christ's divinity) will amount to nothing; whereas the affirmation that, "being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal to God," would amount to a great deal. And the wants of such natures, even if they are not the deepest, if only they are not merely external or superficial, are to be met.

Hence, there is a fair field for textual argumentation on the subject of Christ's divinity. It goes but a little way; and yet that little way is important. If, however, one rests the whole of his teaching on that ground, he comes almost infinitely short of the task that is committed to him. For a Christ proved is not necessarily a Christ realized; a Christ in argument is not necessarily a Christin one's moral consciousness.

THE TRINITY.

Then, there are other relations of the divinity of Christ: namely, its relations to government, to the Trinity, and to the Atonement.

I am a Trinitarian; not because I understand the Trinity, but simply because, all the Scriptures being taken into account, that solution of the Divine existence is more easy and natural of comprehension than any other. Nor do I find the slightest incongruity or the slightest inharmony of idea in the teaching of it. But the importance of that doctrine is another matter. In Boston, during the Socinian defection, there was an abnormal importance attached to it; certain great movements happened to hinge and turn on it; but it ought not to be supposed, because the relation of Christ to the Trinity was important then, or because it is important in the construction of a systematic scheme of theology now, that it is equally important in the conviction and conversion of men by faith in the Lord Jesus.

When men come to me with difficulties on the subject of the divinity of Christ, and of his coequality with the Father, — saying, "How is it possible that he should be God, with such limitations and such weaknesses and such circumscriptions? How can you conceive of Three in One?" — if I should reply philosophically, I should say that the analogy of nature led to a presumption of a Trinity; or that, at any rate, it took away all the presumptions against it.

If you will allow a moment's digression, looking at it in the light of modern discoveries we find that life, organized in its simplest possible forms, develops into

complexities ; and that these complexities themselves separate into groups ; until we come up to man, where we find a multiplication of faculties, families of faculties, in the human soul, — first those faculties which relate to the physical organization, then those faculties which relate to man in his social connections, and then those faculties which relate to the invisible Spirit and the moral world.

Now, the next step would be in the line, not merely of the multiplication of faculties, or of groups of faculties, but of the multiplication of personalities. And if we were to be carried one step further in the line of natural analogical development, it would not tax men severely on that side to believe in the tri-personality of the one God, — although, judged upon the plane of human experience, it is unintelligible. At all events, I can say that, to my mind, there is less proof against it than there is for it.

If it were asked, on the other hand, " How can you conceive of such limitations and weaknesses as existed in the Lord Jesus Christ during his earthly life ? How can you conceive of him as divine in the relations which he then sustained ? " my reply would be this : that no man is able to say how much is required for divinity ; for it is not quantitative alone, — it is qualitative as well. We estimate one's nature by its attributes, and not simply by its magnitude. Who, then, can tell how much it takes to make divinity ? Who has weighed God ? Who has numbered his qualities ? Who has any such knowledge as to say that the development of mind-power and soul-power thus far constitutes one an angel, and that their development thus

far constitutes one a Deity? Who can tell where the finite touches the infinite? No man has the instruments by which he can make these measurements. All that men can do is to say that one is divine in quality, and by his relations to the human want and the human soul.

In regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, constructive theologians attempt to develop, in the theory of the Trinity, exactly what is his position, and what are the relations which he sustains to the Father and the Holy Ghost; but I have been accustomed to say to men, "Jesus Christ is one who stands over against every want in the human soul, and if he is such a one that you may love him with all your strength, if you may reverence him with all your power, if you may lean on him with the utmost confidence that belongs to the human soul, — you may trust in him for time and for eternity; and you could not do more toward God than that. And the upward yearning, the moral aspiration which you feel, is the evidence of Christ in you. You trust him as divine when you give to him all that you can give.

Whatever lies beyond that may be a fit sphere for discussion and for argumentation with philosophical men, and with theologians; yet, so far as concerns your work, which lies in the actual field of the ministry, it seems to me that this practical experience of the divinity of the Saviour will be more apt to bring men into vital relations of faith with him, than the mere philosophical and defined relationships of Christ to God.

I have, in my ministry, been surrounded by multitudes of persons who were reared in the Unitarian

faith, whom I have found to be persons of moral worth, of honesty, of conscientiousness; and I have pursued almost invariably the following course, in attempting to deal with them on this subject: I have attempted to awaken in their souls a strong moral *need*. I have attempted to ply the truth so as to awaken in them growth, yearning, aspiration. And then, when they were aroused, and their desire was strong, I have said to them, "There is a view of God in Christ Jesus which will adapt itself exactly to your want"; and I have presented Christ to them, as he stands related to the soul, as the best argument, and as the one which leads to the most logical conclusion to which they can come. And, one by one, under that mode of treatment, in which the controversial way is laid aside, and the case has been made, as it were, matter of medical practice, opening men's necessities to them, stimulating their desire, making their hunger more intense and more imperative, and then presenting the Lord Jesus Christ in relations of love,—they have accepted him without question, leaving until afterward the argument of moral *consciousness*, which is the transcendent argument, to which all others are subordinate.

When one can say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," out of a consciousness of experience running through the range of his life, he has no need of further argument. He has an argument that is above every other. And to lead men on, step by step, without controversy, to develop their moral life, and to make Christ necessary food to them, is the way in which thousands and thousands of men may be brought to a sweet relationship of a faith in Christ.

THE ATONEMENT.

In the relation of the Saviour to the Atonement, I have had this experience: that thousands of men have been perplexed with what I may call its philosophical theory. I have been accustomed to teach men in regard to this matter, that first of all Christ was to be accepted as a living fact; that, not denying the theory of possibility as to how he came to be the Saviour of the world, which is not without its importance, nevertheless, to know that Christ is the Saviour of the world, made so by Divine preparation, and brought hither to save men from their sins, is more important than to know just *how* it was adjusted through Divine processes and arrangements of government. For, when he presented himself, the command was not, "Believe in me on account of such and such logical arguments of fitness and propriety and governmental adjustments," but, "Believe in me on account of what I am." And he that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, accepting him, does not necessarily need to know how he came to be so and so. Must we not believe in God until we know how he came into existence and how self-existence is possible? Must we not believe a fact until we know the whole history of that fact? Must we not read a letter until we know how the paper was manufactured, how the ink was made, and all the circumstances under which it was indited? It may be interesting to know these things; but, after all, the news which the letter contains is the main thing.

If I am sick, and a prescription is made for me by one who is competent to make it, I do not take it

because I understand the theory of my sickness, nor because I know the ingredients of the mixture which the physician has prescribed for me, nor because I know what is in his mind: I take it by faith in him; and its action is the proof of its excellence.

Now, you can present Jesus Christ to men (I am speaking of those who are difficult to reach) so as neither to perplex them in regard to his relations to the Godhead, nor to entangle them in discussions of the theory and philosophy of the Divine atoning work.

If you present the mere fact that Christ died to save sinners, the heart will often say, as a refrain, "Of whom I am the chief!" If you say that Christ, by his own nature, by his declared love, by his offices as Redeemer of the world, will receive all souls that come to him, and purify them, and save them, that is enough for salvation. It may not be enough for you in making out your system of philosophy or of theology; but it is enough for your preaching, — and you must constantly bear in mind that in these lectures I am speaking of all these theological elements, not as to their structural value, but merely as to their functional use in the practical work of preaching. I apprehend that more men have been converted by the simple presentation of Christ as a Person than by the presentation of the Atonement as a doctrine. Without undervaluing the doctrine or philosophy of the Atonement as it is held by one school or by many, I say that if you preach the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed in the Word of God as One who came into the world to pity, to spare, to uphold, and to save men, you will be more apprehensible, and you will come nearer and more quickly

to men's consciousness, than if you go a long way around and undertake to explain the problems of the moral government of God as it is administered in the universe, and attempt to show how it is that God is able to do this, that, or the other thing, — how, for instance, he can be just and yet the justifier of those who believe.

It is the living, personal Christ, therefore, who ought to be the end and object of your ministry: not to the neglect of those other questions, but because the great mass of men are on a plane where they will be more susceptible to the fact than to any reasoning upon the fact.

THE NEW JERUSALEM BETTER THAN THE OLD.

As I have already intimated, in preaching Christ to men, while you bring up the historic Christ as the basis of all knowledge, it becomes absolutely necessary that you should not stand upon the Christ of eighteen hundred years ago. You must say, as Paul did, "It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again." If you could trace the thoughts of men, I think you would see that much obscurity and hinderance in the development of their spiritual life has arisen from the fact that they have attempted to go back to Jerusalem for their Christ. I know I did in many periods of my life. I tried to submit to Christ; and I imagined him as walking into and out of Jerusalem. In imagination I sat with him under the olive-tree, and looked up into his august face. In imagination I walked with him in Bethany. In imagination I stood by his side as he looked upon Jerusalem, and tried to come to a

sense of the infinite pity which he felt. Thus I went step by step with the Lord Jesus Christ in imagination. I was in bondage to the history of Christ; and it was not until I had broken loose from that bondage, and was enabled, by the Spirit of God quickening the understanding and the heart, to look up to a Christ living, that my yearning was satisfied. A Christ a thousand times more glorious than Jerusalem ever saw; a Christ a thousand times freer, and fuller of the manifestation of love, than any historical Christ; a Christ larger in every way than the Christ of the past; a Christ enwrapping every soul as the whole atmosphere of a continent broods over each particular flower; a Christ conceived of as living near, as overhanging, as thinking of each one, and as working for him, — such a Christ had power with me.

If you train your people to go back to old Jerusalem it will be a weary pilgrimage. There is benefit in that; but the New Jerusalem is better. The ocean of the air is easier traversed by the thought than the sea is by the body. Not the Christ of antiquity, but the "Christ that died," and "is risen again, who is ever at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," — that is the best Christ to represent to your people as manifesting God, and the one that will be most potential with them.

CHRIST, THE REVEALER OF GOD'S PERSONAL DISPOSITION.

Let me say, further, that when our Saviour came into the world a knowledge of God prevailed; but it was most largely a knowledge of God as a Power, as a Governor. The thought of one God, existing in great

power, in supreme wisdom, and in general goodness, had been established in the Jewish consciousness, if I may so say; but the private disposition of God had not kept pace with that thought in the minds of the Jews. They conceived of God as a Governor.

Now, you may know the governor perfectly, and not know the man. Governorship is artificial. *Governor* is an abstract term which, when you look into it, you find to mean simply a functionary, — one who *does*, *performs*, and not one who *is*. The Jews had come to a full conception of God as the Governor of the universe, — as the Lord Jehovah. It seems to me that Christ came into the world to make known to men God in his innermost and personal disposition; and that "the power of God and the wisdom of God" in Jesus Christ is that manifestation which needs to be made of the inner thought and private disposition of the Creator.

CHRIST, THE DELIVERER.

If you look further into the development of Christ in time, you will find that he was not so much one that revealed sin; for a consciousness of sinfulness had become developed in the Hebrews, in the old Jews; a moral sense had been formed in them, and it had prodigious power. The great fault was, that it expended itself on artificial observances, and not on things natural. The best-minded Jews in the time of the Saviour were a thousand times more conscientious than we are; but they frittered away their conscience. They spent it on ten thousand little conventional ceremonies. Right or wrong, with them, was compliance or

noncompliance with certain artificial arrangements. Every step of their life was ritualized and symbolized. They could not walk, they could not eat, they could not look up or down, they could not turn right or left, without coming in contact with something that conveyed to them an idea of right or wrong. Carried to the extent that it was among the Essenes, it almost separated men from life; and they were tormented by it. They were under a bondage of conscience which was strong, multifarious, and minute, and which took away all real liberty, and all momentum of the moral nature.

Christ came not to reveal that men were sinful, but to release them from sinfulness. He was a Saviour and Deliverer. He reproached men that they were binding burdens on their fellow-men, making it harder and harder for them to use their functions naturally, and to live with spontaneity, and under the inspiration of great motives that, once in operation, took care of themselves, through Divine guidance. He came to untie what had been bound. He came to unravel what was knit. He came to set man on another plane. He came to teach men that not what they ate or drank, that not what went into the mouth, but that which went out, defiled them. He came to say to them, "You may eat consecrated bread or unconsecrated bread, so that your heart is right." He came to show them that right and wrong had reference to the internal state of men, to the qualities of their disposition; and that it was the moral sentiments of the soul that determined rectitude and the opposite, and not any mere external acts. He went back of the artificial, and lib-

erated his countrymen from a bondage which was destroying their moral sense, and put them on larger ground, — the ground, namely, that right or wrong was to be determined by the interior faculties of every man. And he put himself into such a relation to these interior faculties, that a man who loves him with all his heart will have one guiding master-impulse for right, and that all the other dispositions will take their relative places in gradation under it, and will act according to its direction.

As when the great wheel in a factory turns every other wheel spins and buzzes, so he who, through the inner man, puts himself in the relations of love to the Lord Jesus Christ, will have that central and controlling element turning every other faculty right, or making its action right.

Christ did not come, then, so much to convict men of their sins, as to show them how they might be released from sinfulness through faith in him, and through loving obedience to him.

When, therefore, in preaching the Lord Jesus Christ to men, you find that they are in perplexity as to the exterior life, as to the outward and governmental relations of the Saviour, there is a way of escape from human consciousness of sin, and from human want of support and helpfulness to the Divine Deliverer.

CHRIST TO ACT THROUGH THE PREACHER'S PERSONALITY.

I have never, in all my ministry, had, in my own experience, any such realization of the Saviour, or any such tenderness of love toward him, as that which I

have enjoyed in attempting to release men from prejudice and bondage in the natural life. The clearest views of the Saviour that I have ever derived have been, not from argument and theory, which were dark, and which I could not understand, but from the living consciousness of men.

When, in times of religious inquiry, I have had men coming to me, I have studied their character; I have studied their wants; I have studied their surroundings; I have felt such an anxiety about them that I have gone again and again to see them; I have looked into their nature, and attempted to set the strong parts over against the weak parts, to help and succor them; and I have asked from day to day with growing interest about their condition, until at last there has been light dawning on their souls. And I have felt myself so strong and joyful in their release, that there has flashed out in my own mind the thought: "Why, that is Christ in you. You are brooding these men. You are thinking of them. You are looking into all their interior economy. You are making their life your own. You are pouring your own life into them. You are giving them the stimulus of hope. You are ministering to them the power of your courage. You are nursing and caring for them. And if you, being evil, know how to do such good things, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven do them!"

Then, with that experience, born out of such conduct, going back to the text of the New Testament, I saw it flaming where before it smouldered; and passages that had been dull as lead began to put on a radiancy which they have never lost. Stars may go down, but stars are

not quenched; and texts may pass out of the horizon, but they come again, and never go back to their dark estate if they are illumined by such glorious passages of heart experience.

Well, following up that analogy, I have sought again and again to use it. Persons would come to me in the utmost anxiety of mind: "Mr. Beecher, I belong to a different parish, and you may think it strange that I do not go to my own minister; but somehow, though he is an excellent man, I am not in sympathy with him; I do not feel free in his presence; but I have always felt that you had such sympathy with people that I could come and tell you all my difficulties." I let them go on, and kept them on that strain, till they poured out their whole heart in confession; and then I turned on them, and said: "You have confidence in me; you believe that I want to help you, and I do; I give you my hand on it; I would not spare myself; I would help you at all hazards; but what am I? There stands right back of me the Lord Jesus Christ, and the feeling of sympathy which you see in me is but a spark which sprang out of that Orb; why do you not go to the Saviour with the same living faith which you repose in me, and say, 'I come to thee for help!'" Thus, out of that personal feeling, I kindle in them a sense of Christ.

HUMAN EXPERIENCE TO INTERPRET THE NATURE OF CHRIST.

Carry it further. When persons come to me, and I instruct them, and find that they are careless and heedless, and have not followed my instructions, do I give

them up? I may rebuke them, and point out to them their folly. I may use stringent motives to excite them to a better way; but out of that comes to me a sense of the patience and the gentleness of Christ. I had almost said that now my living Christ has been formed out of the fragments of Christ-likeness that I have seen in men or in women, or that have been developed in me. I have taken these precious particles, as it were, and have framed them more or less into conceptions; and those conceptions have been exalted and glorified; and I have been surprised to find, on going back to the Bible with these conceptions, and reading it again, how full of meaning were parts of it which before did not mean anything to me.

The letter does kill or blind; and the spirit does give life; but, oh! how blessed the letter is when the soul is alive to read it! How blessed the Word of God is, in its experimental parts, when it takes light, not merely from the Holy Ghost, but from the Holy Ghost shining through the living, personal, human consciousness, bringing your deepest nature to the verification of it, and kindling in your mind a conception that there is such a thing as life much larger than anything that you dream of among men, — a life of love, and pity, and suffering for the sake of another.

And when I think how I have seen fathers suffer for their children (I know a father who has gone through a living death for twenty-five years, with drunken children, his substance wasted, his heart broken, his sorrows flowing like a river; and who suffers yet, and bears yet); when I see what mothers do for their children, what anguish they endure, and with what delight

they do loathsome things, how they begrudge to others the doing of the most revolting offices because they love their babes so much, how they hold themselves aloof from the pleasures of society because it is so sweet to them to serve nothingness with affection; when I see the wonder of mother-love, devoting itself to the child that is helpless and useless, and that lives almost only in the prophecy of the mother's hope; — when I see these manifestations, I take them up as precious things from heaven, as God incarnated in men who bear his likeness with them; and out of such materials, thus gathered together, I frame such a sense of the real, ever-living Christ, that when I go to my people I go to them with as much certainty as ever John had, or as ever came to one of the disciples.

I *know* that my Redeemer liveth. I know that the conception which I have of the Lord Jesus Christ, filling all space and every realm, is not a cunningly devised fable, is not a fiction, is not a poem, but is a mighty power.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, THE CENTRAL SOURCE OF POWER.

This leads me to the last thing that I shall say this afternoon, which is this: I do not believe that any of you are ever going to preach Christ until you have Christ formed in you. It is this experimental knowledge of the Saviour wrought into your ministration, and brought to bear upon men in a living form, that is needed.

Is not that the theory of the Christian ministry? Do you not stand for Christ, as Christ? It is, indeed, a thing to make a man tremble. If men see that you

are proud; that when you are reviled you revile again; that you are haughty and domineering; that you lord it over men; that you are willing to have everybody honor and serve you; that you are very good-natured and happy in your ministerial position when the elders all bow to you, and the deacons all look up to you, and your people all do just what you want them to; that in all things you act in accordance with the great laws of human nature, — if men see these things, you may preach Christ till you are hoarse and you will not make them believe in him. To talk about his being divine, and to talk about the atonement, is all very well; but it is only when Christ is in you, — in your meekness, in your long-suffering, in your gentleness, in your returning good for evil, in your praying for those who despitefully use you and persecute you; it is only when Christ has been so formed that men see him in you, even though it be only as through a glass, darkly, but a living, pulsating life, so that they can take your example and lift it, by the power of imagination, into a higher sphere; it is only when, seeing your good works, they glorify your Father which is in heaven, — it is only then that you preach Christ effectually.

If I were asked, "What is the greatest necessity of the Christian ministry to-day?" I should say that it was the power which comes from Christ-likeness. And in studying Christ, while the text and the philosophy are important, the spirit is a thousand times more important. Your whole Christian ministry will derive its chief consequence and power from whatever of Christ is in you, and in you not by thought, but by disposition and life.

Young gentlemen, the world is passing fast. It seems but yesterday when I thought I was a young man: to-day I am an old man. It seems but yesterday when I thought I had endless time before me: my work is almost done. You are beginning, and life is all before you, with its taxations, with its annoyances, with its cares. The most important thing you have before you in life is not that you should have an eminent place, or a great name, or large revenues, or even success, in the ordinary sense of the term. The chiefest thing that lies before you, which you can conceive of, is that you should ripen into the disposition of the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way that when you come to men it shall be as if Christ came to them, bringing his power, his nature, his influence, his feeling, his life. You are all running to the Lord, and saying, "Lord, grant that I may sit on thy right hand or on thy left"; and Christ is saying to you, "My son, can you drink of the cup that I drink of? Can you be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized withal?" You want to be radiant ministers, eloquent ministers, ministers of great influence and success. Do you want to sit on the Lord's right hand or on his left? Then give him your heart, so that in humility, in gentleness, in unfailing sweetness, in patience under all circumstances, you shall be like him. In order to be successful and influential ministers, are you willing to bear about with you the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that his love may be made manifest in your heart? This it is to preach Christ, as the wisdom of God and the power of God unto the salvation of men.

VII.

VIEWS OF THE DIVINE LIFE IN HUMAN CONDITIONS.

March 4, 1874.

YOUNG gentlemen, I do not know as I shall succeed at all, this afternoon, in what I wish to do. If I do not, it will not be the first time that a good subject has been spoiled in the handling, in my ministry. Now, every effort that you make to do something that requires tact and skill and the various subtle combinations of mind which are called forth in preaching, if it throws you back in discouragement, and causes you to feel that it is of no use, it will harm you; but it should not, for no man ever undertook a subject honestly and faithfully, and failed in it, that he was not better prepared to succeed the next time. Some of the best sermons that you will ever preach, probably, will be those which are made from abortive attempts, broken up and remodeled afterwards.

I wish to speak, this afternoon, of the aspects of a divine life in human conditions.

Say to any one class of men, — poets, philosophers, or religionists, — "Draw out, if you please, your con-

ception of the way in which a perfect Being, a Deity, would conduct himself if he were thrown down into time, and amidst the temptations of physical law and the conditions of human life. Give this ideal picture." I suspect that in no single instance would men unenlightened by the actual facts of the New Testament come within speaking distance of the reality; and yet, considered as an abstract proposition, this conception is profoundly interesting to a student, it is still more interesting to a preacher, and it is indispensable to those who would practically avail themselves of the mission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

THE DIVINE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IN JESUS.

Now, in the beginning, you must notice that Jesus, as he came to this world, — born of a woman, being successively a babe, a young man, a working man, a toiler among the poor citizens, himself a citizen, subject to all the experiences that belong to what may be called his strictly secular and early life, — from our first knowledge of him as a thinker or an actor manifested the divine consciousness. That is to say, it was very plain that he himself stood in the conditions of this life as one who remembered a former existence, — as one who knew himself to be higher than kings and greater than lords; yea, that, without the slightest apology, or any sense of incongruity, he did not hesitate to take a higher place than the prophets, than the law, than the altar, than the temple, than the whole Jewish economy; and not only this, but that, though in time-relations he spoke of himself as subordinate to the Father, yet in eternal relations he spoke of himself

as equal with the Father, and as his companion. He never, in a single instance, showed a consciousness of limitation, or of imperfection, or of infirmity, or of sin; he never uttered a conviction which indicated that he recognized anything less than absolute holiness in himself; he always carried himself with an easy and gentle grace, in the consciousness of his perfection, which we had almost said came from life-long breeding, but which was innate, inborn, with him.

He teaches us to say, "Our Father"; but he never said so: he always said, "*My* Father." We are all born of men; and yet he seeks out the phrase, "Son of Man," as something significant when applied to himself. That phrase is not a distinctive title for you or for me, because we are all sons of men. There was therefore an innate consciousness, an inherent sense in his soul, that "Son of Man" was a strange title to call him by, inasmuch as he was God's own equal; and the phrase has, under such circumstances, great power.

HIS SOCIAL, NATIONAL, AND PROFESSIONAL POSITION.

We are prepared, then, starting from this consciousness of the Saviour, to ask how he carried himself. In the first place you must recollect that he was not an ordained minister at all. He was a man of the people; he sprang from among them; and that was not strange, as the Jews were democratic in their spirit and institutions. Having sprung from among the people, he never left their ranks. He never went through the appointed education. He had only the education which belonged to the peasantry among the Jews. There is, at any rate, no evidence that he had any other, however

much presumption there may be as to the probability. He never joined himself to any of the great sects or divisions within the one Jewish church, and he was never sent forth by authority. He appeared just as the prophets did. For the Jewish system was remarkable in this: that while the regulation worship was to the last degree precise and imperative, any men and any women, in the whole history of the Jewish people, who had primal inspiration, were at liberty to sing, to speak, to teach, or to prophesy. The Jews had the utmost respect, therefore, for native genius and power. Among the Jews, they who undertook to administer stated affairs must do it in stated ways; but those whom God called outside of these ways had liberty to exercise their functions according to their inspiration. So Christ never went out of his position, as one born among the people and a private citizen. He spoke only because he had whereof to speak, and somewhat to say.

All his life long, then, he appeared not as a professional man. He was not in any proper sense of the term a priest. He represented nothing, he did not stand for anybody, among his people. He stood a Voice, a Light, a living Soul. His was not a personality of solitariness, but a personality separated from official classes in order that he might always belong to his kind. He was not ordained out from among the common people, but he abided in their midst, as it were touching them, and being near, therefore, to their personal sympathies.

Then, he was a man of his own age, and of his own country. Although he was divine, and therefore was

absolute and universal in his knowledge of the truth, in the higher range of his consciousness, nevertheless, not only did he come from among the common people, but he came from the Hebrews; he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and he was true to his lineage. He was faithful in all respects to the best things which belonged to the Jewish national life.

There is great significance, too, in this, if you bear in mind that it was the divine consciousness striving to keep close to man's consciousness; that it was the divine heart held near to the common heart, that men might receive light and warmth and inspiration from God.

To a large extent this was one secret — not the only one, but one — why the great Jewish common people felt as they did in regard to Christ. They were proud of him as the ideal, typical Jew. He represented to them the best things. He observed the Jewish Sabbath. To him the synagogue was not forbidden ground. He worshiped there. He conformed himself to its customs. He visited the temple. During his active ministry he was probably as regular in his attendance at Jerusalem as any man in all Galilee.

So he observed the laws and customs of his country, and identified himself with the people. He came in such a way that they felt, "This man is the representative of all of us"; and when they saw that he had miraculous power, they began to say, "This is the Messiah; he is a Jew of great nature, great power, and great glory; and he is to set us free." And it was with disgust and reaction that they looked upon him afterward, when he would not use that power to make

himself, and would not allow himself to be made, king. It was this fact that caused defection from him, and drove him out of Galilee, to the foot of the mountains, where he was transfigured. It was the high-tide of his popularity; but it ebbed among the common people when they found that this Jew would not lead the Jews to victory.

One fact, however, is to be borne in mind all the time, namely, that the conscious divinity which was in Christ allied itself to nationality, to manners and customs, to usages, to laws, to services, to everything that should identify him with his people.

HIS UNIVERSAL SYMPATHY.

Then, again, we are to bear in mind that he manifested a universal sympathy with men. I am not speaking, now, of that kind of universal sympathy which would remind you of a cloud that moves over a whole continent, and therefore is universal, raining alike on everything. What I mean, distinctly, is this: that I am struck, in following the Saviour in his walk through the land, to see how he treated alike every class, whether civic, professional, or moral, — that is, how he treated them with sympathy. The poor he treated with rare tenderness; but with not a whit more tenderness than he did the rich Pharisees, who were able to throw open their houses and invite him to dinner. He had a heart for rich men just as much as for poor men. He walked with them when it was natural that he should. He had no prejudice against persons because they were in office. He was not opposed to rulers, to Pharisees and Sadducees, as such. If he met them, and they

were right-minded men, the fact of their official position did not repel him from them.

In the earlier stages of his ministry the men who were high in station looked him over to make use of him. They hoped that he would be the foremost Pharisee, that he would exert his power in their behalf, and that he would serve their party; and they became antagonistic to him only when they despaired of making him partial, and of shutting him up within the bounds of a party movement. To the Roman centurion he was kind, though the class were foreigners, and hated by the Jewish people. He showed himself benign and considerate and tender to the Syro-Phœnician woman, although he at first tantalized her, as a means of developing that which was in her, — for it seems to me that her case was like that where the diver brings up an oyster from the depths below. Rude and rough, it is most unseemly; but he knocks it and beats it with his knife, and finally inserts the blade, and cuts the ligament; and behold, there is the pearl, which never would have been seen if the oyster had not been opened in that way. So Christ opened men by drawing out what was in them, to reveal the exquisite jewels that were hidden there. You never would know what a geode is if you did not crack it with a hammer. When you crack it, you find it to be filled with crystals. I wonder what the geode thinks about it!

Now, Christ went among the rich and the poor alike. And he had compassion for all classes. His nature was one of universal sympathy, such that men felt that he liked them. Wherever he went he produced that impression.

Did you ever go by a rose-bush, in the morning, when the dew was on it, and it was saying its prayers? And when its odor and fragrance came out upon you so fresh and so grateful that it stopped you in your course, or on your errand, and you took three or four additional quaffs, did you ever do it without feeling, "This rose-bush likes me"? Did it not bring to you a certain sense of the gift-power on the part of the rose-bush, as if it were conscious?

Wherever Christ went he exhaled something. There was that in him which, whether he went among the high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, good or bad, publicans and harlots or Essenes and Sadducees and Pharisees, drew men to him. He made life sweeter to them. He made them feel that there was something precious near them. He woke them up and stimulated them.

If this was merely a great moral consciousness in the world, it was one thing; but if it was the Divine Being carrying himself in human conditions, it is another and very different thing, of which I shall speak.

HIS SUSCEPTIBILITY TO PERSONAL AFFECTION.

Bear in mind, again, the great susceptibility which was developed, in the earthly life of our Lord, to the sentiment of love. I discriminate between benevolence and love, the former having reference to being, in general; to the universal capacity of experiencing pleasure and happiness; to a common susceptibility to beauty and desirableness: the latter having a special and individual element.

Now, while Christ was compassionate and benevo-

lent, he had also to a remarkable degree the faculty of personal love, and of exciting in turn the most enthusiastic affection. This, too, is to be interpreted from the same standpoint, namely, that he walked in the consciousness of his own divinity among men. And yet, when the young man came to him, and said, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" he saw that there was that which was rare and excellent in the young man, and he "looked upon him and loved him."

Not simply was he subject to those gradual yearnings of the heart which cautious men have who watch over against a heart for six years, and then try it, and at last come into a kind of smoldering affection for it, — not at all. With him, it was to look and love. He saw, and his soul went out with a gush. It is the inspirational and spontaneous carriage of his affections that strikes me.

I take notice that there were but three of the disciples that he specially loved. He loved them all; but there were three that he loved better than the others, — Peter, James, and John. You will hardly ever see the names of the others mentioned except in an inventory of the disciples. These three were generally with him. They went with him into the mountain, and into the chamber at Jerusalem; and afterwards they were the principal men who figured in connection with him. Doubtless the others were useful in their way: but these were evidently the men whom he loved. Probably he loved them because they deserved to be loved.

You will take notice of another fact, — that when he made the acquaintance of the family at Bethany (the time at which this occurred we do not know; for we

have only fragments of the history of the life of Christ; there is no continuity in it; certainly there is nothing like amplitude in the accounts which we have concerning him. John, you know, said, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" — which I do not take to be literal, exactly, but which is an Oriental exaggeration that gives you some conception of the multiplicity of events connected with his life that have not been recorded), — you will take notice that when he made the acquaintance of Lazarus and Mary and Martha, it is declared that he loved them; and the kind of familiarity with which Martha complained to him about Mary, saying, "Do not you care that she sits, lazy, at your feet, while I have to go round the house and do the work?" — that kind of familiarity does not spring out of a casual acquaintanceship. It comes from long intimacy and great confidence.

So, it is plain that the nature of Christ was one that exercised and begot direct personal love. And Christ was God. There is great power in this thought to me. The things that he did, he did not do because he was a man. Being God, and walking as a man among men, he did these things; and they show how the divine nature acted through him.

I will challenge all human literature to produce the equal of the last discourses of our Master, as they are given by John. He delivered them while standing under the very cope of death, when he felt the full premonition that his time had come, when he knew

what was before him. In the midst of the whole round and orb of unexampled and mysterious suffering he said to his beloved, that, having loved them, he would love them unto the end.

Now read that discourse of love. How deep it is! How high it is! How strange it would be, if we had not been so familiar with it that we walk over it like a dusty road, and tread it under our feet! It is wonderful beyond all comprehension that in such an hour that Heart of conscious Divinity should have burned so toward these poor, ignorant, fearful, ambitious, prejudiced disciples, and poured over them a declaration, time and time again, that might make an angel tremble with joy. And to say to me that it was a man who did it would make him a wonderful man, — but it would spoil all my Bible. To tell me, on the other hand, that that was the carriage of God's heart, would bring God very near to me, and open to me the future in a way that nothing else could.

ATTRACTIVENESS OF CHRIST'S BEARING.

More than this, I call you to take notice of that variety, that play of every part and side of the Divine nature in Christ, which made him the most attractive and fascinating man of his time. I think that the attempts to make perfect men are about the dreariest things that take place in fiction and biography. I never saw one of that class who are called "perfect men" that I would not go five miles across lots to get out of his way.

When we undertake to make perfect moral men according to the prevailing idea, they are so dry, so pre-

cise, so rigid, so afraid of evil, and so distrustful of themselves, that we take pretty much all the color out of their cheek, and pretty much all the throb out of their heart, and pretty much all the vim out of their hand, and pretty much all the wildness and freedom out of their foot, and leave them with scarcely any of those elements which make them agreeable companions in life. And it is often said, "That man is spoiled by religion. He has joined the church, and he is not anything like the good fellow that he was before. He used to have a free and large nature; but now he has a mask on his face, and a corselet on his breast, and greaves on his legs." People are consoled by the hope that the disclosure of his good qualities will take place, as I also hope it will, in the life that is to come.

Now, it is an utter pity for goodness to be made poor, lean, and mean. It is a pity that selfishness, that pride, that the intellect, that that which is of this world, should be made more radiant and glorious than those higher qualities which belong to the Christian character. It is a pity that men should look upon secular heroes, and say, as they are often obliged to say, "Well, if he *is* a worldly man, he is a royal fellow. He is wrong, he is loose in his habits, there are many things about him which cannot be justified; but he is a first-rate specimen of a man, after all." And it is a pity.

It is a pity that of men created of God, and regenerated by Divine grace, it should be said, "They are good men, to be sure, but they are so uninteresting! Yes, they are good men, but they are a little dry. Yes, they are good men, they are conscientious, but their

conscience is like a harness every buckle of which girds at each step. O yes, they are good men! Society has to have all sorts of men, and good men fill up." I always feel humiliated and ashamed when I hear such talk. Divine wisdom, divine purity, divine disinterestedness, divine integrity, divine justice, yea, divine penalty, all of them are heroic; and if we could but see them as they are seen above, they would seem beautiful to us. There is nothing on earth so beautiful as wisdom, the beginning of all beauty; there is nothing so free; there is nothing so large; there is nothing so attractive; there is nothing so desirable.

Holding this view, when I come to read of the earth-walking of my God, — my Jesus-God, — I find that he had just that liberty and just that spring which comes from the supremacy of the higher elements of the soul. He did not go around all the while with his resolutions in his hands, and with a sort of half-consciousness that he was under a necessity of being good. It does me good to see that he was grieved. It gratifies me to know that he was angry sometimes; I would not have had it otherwise for the world. A nature that cannot be made angry in this world must be a stagnant pool with waters so thick that the winds cannot stir them. I am pleased that he was subject to moods that came and went; that his mind experienced changes; that he had elevations and depressions of feeling, — in other words, that the imagination, the reasoning, the affections and the moral sentiments, and all the appetites and passions in him, stood serving his predominant feeling of love in such ways that they adjusted themselves to the infinite varieties of life.

Christ was not a stiff, stark censor, walking among men in such a way that children ran away from him. He never would have made you think of the ideal deacon, — never!

Take a dramatic scene. It is the only one that is recorded; but there were many others, — I will vouch for it.

On one occasion, when he was talking to the grown folks, such was the influence which he produced on the people in the crowd, that mothers, with babes in their arms, as they stood listening to this man's preaching, had an impulse. What was that impulse? What is the impulse that people often feel when they hear a minister preach in a church? Anything but a sense of personal adhesion. Anything but a desire to run to him. But when Christ was discoursing, right and left, through the crowd, these mothers, who loved their children and who had their world in their arms, had this impulse: "O, my boy would be a better man all his life if He would just touch him!" And one said it to another. And they pressed themselves up to this man. Such a man he seemed to them, that they said, "If he will but lay his hand on my child, it will be a priceless boon." But the disciples had the old Jewish notion of propriety, and said to these mothers, "Go away; he is talking to grown folks, not to children."

Well, now, there is another feature connected with that which ought not to be lost sight of, namely, that the children did not cry and run away from Christ, but nestled right up to him. This was remarkable; for, as you very well know, children are shy of strangers, and not once in ten thousand times could you take a child

into a great noisy, boisterous crowd, and not have it frightened and restless. You know that almost never will a child sit perfectly still during a discourse. But in this case they seem to have been quiet and contented; and we have it recorded that Christ took them up in his arms, and laid his hands upon them and blessed them. There were those little cuddling children sitting still while he was talking; and when they were brought to him he lifted them up, and put his arms around them, and laid his hand on their heads; and I do not doubt that he kissed them every one.

This reveals two things, — the effect that he produced on men, and his own feelings toward them. He was divine. That was divinity. That is the way the heart of God acts. It was let down among you, and right into your conditions, in order that it might act so that you could stand and see it; and so that when, afterwards, you lifted it up into the infinite sphere, you should lift up the right thing, and lift it up in right directions.

JESUS NOT A FAULT-FINDER.

I might spend the whole afternoon in detailing instances of this kind: but there is one more point that I wish to speak of, namely, that this man, who was filled with divine consciousness; that this man, who had the very soul of purity and sinlessness; that this man, who came to reveal, as far as the world was prepared to receive them, the secrets of the future spiritual and eternal realm; that this man, who was the ruler of integrity; that this man, who carried in himself the intensest sense of right, — that he rebuked and

criticised, and yet never was querulous, and never was fault-finding. This is one of the surprising things. I have gone through the four Gospels oftener than I have gone through my garden, looking and hunting, from the beginning to the end of them (and, young gentlemen, this is not a very hard way to read the New Testament), — I have gone right straight through the Gospels time and again, to see what was the mood of Christ's mind, and to see what was the manner in which he laid that mind, with rectitude and truth in it, on the erring, wavering, crude, nascent minds of the men who were about him; and I have come back profoundly impressed with this feeling: that he was not a fault-finder, and that he did not go into neighborhoods and families, saying, "This is wrong; you ought to correct that," and so on. He did not do what you see many conscientious parents do, who are forever saying to their children, "Take care, my dear; don't do that; keep away from there; you must n't do so," thus always holding them in check, and giving them forever a sense of their imperfection. He was not like the mother whose little girl, when asked by her Sunday-school teacher what her name was, said it was "Emma Don't." The child had had "don't" said to her so much that she supposed it was a part of her name!

In reading the life of Christ we derive from it, what? A sense of the loftiness of his spirit. In following him through his career among men on earth, what find we? Not querulousness, not complaining; but kindness and love toward those who were out of the way. The people, in his presence, felt that they were guilty; but it

was his nature, when walking among imperfect and sinful men, to so carry himself toward them that they should feel the cordial of the Divine heart, and be lifted up by it. This I take to be very significant.

THE PREACHER MUST MAKE CHRIST DESIRABLE.

Now, then, my first remark, in view of these facts, or glances toward lines of fact, is this: that whoever preaches Christ among men, and fails to make him the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely, does not preach Christ as Christ preached himself. It does not make any difference where you put him in the moral government of God; it does not make any difference how much you build texts up about him; it does not make any difference how you analyze him; it does not make any difference how you incorporate him into a philosophical system; whatever else you do, your great aim must be to make him appear as attractive and beautiful in your representations as he was in his own life. That is the test. And it is not enough that it should be so once in a while: such is to be the average presentation. For he is the Hope of the world; and the world is not made up of perfect men and perfect women. The world does not begin at the upper sphere. The whole race is born low; every generation commences at the bottom; and what the world needs is something that shall help them, that shall encourage them, that shall lift them up. That is what Christ gave, in his mission upon earth; and he fails rightly to apprehend the character of Christ, and rightly to present him to men, who does not make him beautiful, winning, desired, and most desirable.

CHRIST'S LOVE TO SINNERS.

The next point that I would make is, that our Master produced the impression of exceeding loveliness and sympathy and yearning, but that he — I hardly know what term to use; *condescension* is not the right word, because it brings in the idea of aristocracy — he did not sit to receive men; he bore himself in on them. He did not allow himself to be a part of the race in a generic and philosophical sense alone: he went out to men. He sought them.

It is one thing for a man to sit in state and receive calls from citizens, and greet them pleasantly as they come one after another, and be gracious to them, and express a desire to be better acquainted with them, and listen courteously to what they have to say, — it is one thing to do this; and it is a very different thing for a man to go about and visit those citizens in their various spheres of life.

Now, the impression derived from reading the life of the Saviour is this: that he took himself to men; in other words, that he came down and joined himself to their want and to their weakness. The point of union between conscious divinity and the lowest imperfection is, that it is the nature of the Divine to unite itself to weakness in order to medicate it, and inspire it with strength to raise itself up.

Ah, if I had known this in early life, what years of struggle, and at times of anguish, I might have been saved! But I thought of Christ as standing beyond and above my reach; and I supposed that I could have the comfort and the blessedness of his fellowship only

when I had complied with certain conditions; and I spent years and years in trying to comply with those conditions, in order that I might come into intimate relations with him. But if I had known that it was his nature to come right to me, and that already he was mine, and mine not because I had been awakened, and had repented, and had entered upon a certain course, but because I was poor, and needed him, that would have sustained me. To be Divine is to take care of the poor and needy and sinful: and if I had known that Christ was mine because I was poor and needy and sinful; if I had known that it was the Divine nature to love, and to love those who were degraded and unfortunate and in trouble; if I had known that I had my Christ to begin with, what an encouragement it would have been to me! If I had known that it was the essential nature of God to succor the oppressed, to make himself a ransom for those who were in bondage, to bring them out of that bondage, and to break up the habits and destroy the evil forces which were in them and about them, by a celestial inspiration of his own heart which should enable them to become the sons of God, I should have been spared much solicitude and pain. The thought that he lets himself down, and takes hold of the human race *as they are,* is most encouraging. It is divinity to do that. In all the elements of the universe there is nothing so curative, nothing so lenient, nothing so patient, nothing so sweet, nothing so gentle, nothing so considerate, and nothing so adaptable, as the Divine nature. There is nothing that goes down to the infinitesimal want like that Divine love which is supreme.

O, take away my Jehovah, but do not take away my Jesus! When I behold the God that sits back of universal thought, and back of immediate power, that reigns in the vacuity and vastness of eternity, I behold One who is most venerable and admirable, and it makes me shudder and tremble; and the more I look at it the worse it is: but let me look at One who loves the poor, and is sympathetic toward them, and is able and stands ready to do in my innermost soul what my mother did for me, waiting until I had grown out of childhood, and helping me all the time, — let me look at such a One, and think that he is patient with men while they are being developed from weakness to strength, and I feel drawn to him. Give me that view of Christ, and I am strong for myself, not only, but I have strength by which to go forth and preach Christ to my fellow-men.

A speculative Christ you will have to preach, many times; you will have to preach a doctrinal Christ; and his governmental relations to men you will have to preach; but the mainstay and power of your ministry must be in this: *the preaching of Christ as the Lover of sinners.* God so loved mankind that he gave his Son to die for them. He loved them before they had shown repentance or reformation; he loved them while yet they were at enmity to him; and he gave them the best gift that he had to give.

PREACHING MUST BE ENFORCED BY PRACTICE.

So, then, once more, in preaching this Christ, the fact must come out — it ought to come out, at any rate — that the identification between Christ and the truth is

to have an answering element in you. Christ said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." It is as if he had said, "I am the exemplification of my own teaching. Do I talk to you about meekness? Look at me and see what I mean. Do I talk to you about love? Look at me and see what I mean. Do I talk to you about giving your life for those who are around about you? Look at me and see how I am doing it. Do I talk to you about being patient under provocations? See how I act under provocations." He carried in himself his creed, and said to men, "Learn of me."

Now, in your ministry you are to reproduce that which you desire to impress upon men; and you can never reproduce the heart by the head: you can never reproduce a spiritual truth by a philosophical idea. You must arouse the higher life of men by exhibiting to them the thing itself which you are aiming to develop in them. Christ preached, being himself a representation of humility and gentleness and meekness and disinterestedness and love; and you are to follow his example in this regard. You will not preach effectually either in the pulpit or in the pew until you can show the fruits of the Spirit. When you can do that, you will preach to some purpose.

I think that if there were a church of two hundred men and women on the globe, who were united in the enthusiasm of their higher moral feelings, they would make their way in the world like an army with banners. The reason why churches are so defective, and

why their power is so limited, is the want of that contagious enthusiasm of soul which they need to enable them to resist every temptation, to abide in the spirit of love, to overcome evil in every form, to endure trial whenever it shall overtake them, — in short, to be like the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Put into the various relations of life one or two hundred persons whose life should be exactly conformed to the example and teaching of the Saviour, and sooner could men stand before the compound blow-pipe than they could stand before such a living exemplification of the gospel as it is laid down in the New Testament. What we lack is not theology; simply to live upon that would be like gnawing a bone: what we want is life, — *life*, — LIFE!

THE TRAITS OF JESUS EXPANDED TO INFINITY.

I had occasion to say, in a former lecture, that you must beware of locating your present Christ in old Jerusalem. Now you see how it is, that when you wish to carry the thoughts of your people to the ever-living Christ, you are to do it in such a way as to develop a sense of his loving and forgiving nature. He is not different in heaven from what he was on earth, except in method. You know not how spirits live; you know not the conditions of spirit-life; but you know that every one of those truths which he showed on earth he showed under great disadvantage. You know that on earth he was limited and restricted; and if, under such circumstances, he pitied men, how is it in heaven? He has not lost the quality of pity there, but it has taken on greater power and scope and re-

source. Did he have disinterested love upon earth? Then in his heavenly estate it is expanded boundlessly. Did he on earth give himself that others might not perish, or suffer? That he is doing in heaven to-day, including in his mercy all intelligent beings in the universe.

There is no one who carries so many burdens as God manifest in Christ. There is no one that carries so much sympathy and so much succor as he. There is no one who, like him, bears the wants of the race, as a father and a mother bear the necessities of their much-loved children, doing more for those that are threatening to break away and go loose than for those that are obedient and virtuous. He is one who said there should be "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

This is Jesus transferred, in our thoughts, to the infinite sphere. And when you represent to your people God's heart in the heavenly land, make it up of elements which were manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ on earth. The true use of those elements is to mold them together, exalt them to the upper sphere, and then direct your people from the letter to the spirit. And by and by, as your hearers more and more follow this glorified conception, there will be a likeness in them to the Master; and they shall grow more and more radiant, more and more like him, more and more joyful, until he shall come for them.

THE PREACHER'S REWARD.

And, young gentlemen, it matters but very little

what titles you get here, what emoluments, what confidence, and what pleasure; for when you shall stand at the coming of the Lord, in the gateway of heaven, saying to him, "Here am I, and these whom I have brought," one greeting, one look, from him will repay you for every groan, for every sorrow, for every sadness, and for all the waiting that you ever knew upon earth. You are sons of God walking in disguise. What you do now you know not.

I can conceive, since the extension of the use of electricity, of a man, some old Beethoven, deaf, sitting in his room and playing on an instrument half a mile away, by means of wires connecting that instrument with the keys that are under his hand. I can imagine how, as he rolled off wonderful strains of music which he could not hear, an audience, unbeknown to him, might be gathered about that far-off instrument, listening, music-struck.

In this world you are playing on keys whose response is in the heavenly land, where you cannot hear, but angels listen to it; and when you return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon your heads, you will be among the happiest of all that have lived upon earth, — kings and priests unto God.

VIII.

SINS AND SINFULNESS.

March 15, 1874.

I SOMEWHAT fear, this afternoon, that I shall render myself liable to misapprehension, — a thing so rare that I might venture upon it as a luxury, perhaps, if it were not for the importance of the theme which I purpose to discuss, namely, the subject of *Sins and Sinfulness.*

HUMAN SINFULNESS A FUNDAMENTAL FACT.

I suppose I have as deep a personal consciousness, and as strong and abiding a sense of the sinfulness of the race, and of the indispensable need of Divine interposition in behalf of men on account of sin, as any man with my faculties could have; and, therefore, in the course of my statements, I must not be understood either as lowering the importance, or as in any way doing away with the fact, of that doctrine, which underlies theology. For, although the grand architectural facts of scientific theology are the existence, the will, and the government of God, yet the fundamental fact is the sinfulness of man. That fact is to theology what disease is to medicine. Unless there were dis-

eases, there could be no science of medicine. There might be a science of hygiene, but there could be none of remedy; and unless there were sinfulness in man, there could be no doctrine of repentance, of new birth, of atonement, or of Divine inspiration and recuperative power, — in short, almost nothing would be left.

THE SCRIPTURAL *versus* THE SCHOLASTIC MODE OF DISCUSSING IT.

And yet it is remarkable that our ideas of sin, for the most part, have come to us neither from the Gospel nor from an original observation of facts as they are, — that is to say, neither from the authority of Christ nor from scientific induction. The questions as they have been mostly discussed have come down to us from the schools. They may be none the better and none the worse for that; but, as a mere matter of fact, to a large extent the questions which have concerned the minds of thinkers in theology, and which run through all my remembrance as I was trained to discussion in the seminary, and which were supposed to have a most important relation to the right founding of Christian ministers, are questions which we have derived from the philosophy of the schools.

Christ never, in a single instance that I can discover, defined the nature of sin. Nor can I find a single instance in which he declared that the race were universally sinful. That form of statement, which is so common with us as to be supposed to be Scriptural, is not found in the teaching of the Saviour, at any rate, whatever may be the case in respect to the Apostles. I do not mean by this that there is no hint, that we

ought not to find it out, and that there may not be a very powerful influence exerted by philosophical inquisition: I merely say that such is not the way in which Christ preached. He did not preach universal *sinfulness:* he preached about *sins.* He did not preach the abstract philosophy of wrong-doing: far more; assuming universal wrong-doing, he dwelt on the elements of recovery, and of the power of repentance, of the new life, and of Divine succor. He continually pointed out to men, and to each kind of men as he met them, their special sins. He did not say, "Your nature is depraved"; he said, "Go, sell all that thou hast: come, follow me, and great shall be thy reward in heaven."

Now, when a man loves money, it seems rather hard to tell him to give away all that he has, and he shall be paid up in heaven; the time to wait is so long! But the keynote of that man's life was struck; and he went away convicted, probably, ten thousand times more than he would have been if the philosophical and general doctrine of sinfulness, which included him, had been taught to him. For it may be laid down as very certain that anything which is predicated of the whole race, and which belongs to any individual man in common with the whole race, will not very much disturb him; if there is to be that which shall disturb him, it must be something which is personal to him, which is peculiar to him, which singles him out, and which makes him ashamed and sorry for himself; whereas, things that unite him to all his race in very many ways take off the edge of consciousness, and abate self-condemnatory judgments.

Nevertheless, in theology we find generic questions rather than specific; or, that which is specific is remitted to the sphere of ethics or morality.

More than that, there has grown up, as distinguished from the doctrinal preaching of sin generically, a kind of contempt for preaching against specialties, as if that was superficial; as if it belonged rather to the department of morals; as if to preach on *sins* was not nearly so efficacious as to preach on *sinfulness;* and so the general disposition has been greatly insisted upon, while specific issues have not been made so much of.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

First comes the question of questions, — that of the origin of evil; and if all the books, all the tracts, all the pamphlets, all the sermons, and all the articles which have been written on that subject were gathered together, and heaped up, not the pyramids of Egypt would be so large as the pile which they would make; and if all the passions which have been excited in the discussion one against another were concentrated, there would be fire enough to burn them all to ashes.

As to the origin of evil, this is to be said: We know just as much about it as our fathers did, and not a bit more; they knew as much about it as we do, and not a bit more; and neither did they nor do we know anything about it.

Suppose the schools of medicine, instead of discussing the structure of man, instead of investigating his organization, instead of acquainting themselves with the nervous system, the venous system, the arterial system, the muscular system, instead of inquiring into

the wholesome conditions, the morbid conditions, and the remedial conditions of the body, — suppose that, instead of doing these things, they (the Homœopaths, the Allopaths, and the others) should quarrel as to the origin of disease, as to how it came into the world, as to who was sick first, and as to why that person was sick? That would be no more a waste of time and brains than, in considering the interior or spiritual structure of man, to burrow after the origin of evil, and follow up the questions which spring out of this one, going back and asking, "Why did God make the world as he did? Why did he not make it in some other way?"

THE NATURE OF SIN.

Then comes another discussion, which I do not say is unimportant, though I do say it has relation to a side of your work other than that of preaching, — namely, the discussion, in certain stages of the development of the theological system, of the question as to the nature of sin. The question is asked: "Is it physical and inherent, so that a man is born into this world with a sinful nature, that in some way comes down to him from his father, as scrofula or a tendency to gout, or anything of that kind, often does? Is sin a kind of physical secretion?" This view is scarcely held now; but there has been a wordy war on that subject. Much time has been spent by men in discussing the nature of sin as a physical secretion.

Then there is the question as to whether it is a moral secretion; as to whether a man has a sinful nature; as to whether a man intellectually and mor-

ally is sinful, in such a sense that the moment he begins to act he begins to do wrong; so that the very first throb of his being is positively evil, unconscious, hereditary, and inevitable.

Of course, if a man is thrust into the world with a nature which is born to strike, he is no more responsible for striking than a clock is, being made to strike.

Yet the theory of the inherent necessity of sin is at times taught with a vigor that would lead one almost to suppose that a man would sin if he did not sin, as defeating the end for which he was created!

Then comes the question, still more important, or rather still nearer to touching bottom, as to whether sin is personal, voluntary, and yet flowing from an original fountain of sin, — in other words, as to whether Adam was the reservoir and we are the faucets. I do not undertake to say anything on that subject. I am not in the chair of didactic theology. I may simply say that I do not think it is profitable to present that view in preaching, as a means of awakening men, or of leading them to conversion. I do not think that its effect upon the understanding, upon the imagination, or upon the heart is likely to be edifying.

THE DOCTRINE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

Then, sin is defined in all sorts of ways, as if it were a very desirable thing to get a generic and comprehensive term for it. It is defined by affirmatives, the law of selfishness being represented as predominating in men; or it is defined by negatives, representing that there is an entire absence in men of love to God and of a sense of God.

Now, in connection with that, comes a mode of discussing sin which I suppose does not prevail in our day as much as it formerly did. (I say *I suppose*, because, although I believe in going to meeting, I myself almost never hear sermons preached. I cannot, therefore, judge of what the preaching is in the majority of churches.) I allude to the doctrine of total depravity, as it used to be preached. I hold, not that every man is responsible for the statement of a doctrine which can be defended according to an obscure or abstract system, but that every man shall preach any doctrine that he preaches at all, so that it shall defend *itself* in the court of judgment of the men to whom he preaches. I hold that to preach the truth in such a way as to cast the shadow of a lie upon the minds of men, is to mis-preach.

If you say that men are born imperfect, and that therefore not a single man answers the end, or fulfills the destiny, for which he was created; if you say that men are so created that the recuperative power is in God, and not in them; if you say that, in the very nature of things, men, partially sinful, are every one of them in need of the new birth; if you say that human nature is such that, first or last, the moral sense, the reason, the social affections, and every appetite and passion have sinned in their turn, and do sin, — if you make a statement like that, I suppose no person will object to it: but if you make a general statement, to the effect that men are totally depraved, you will be misunderstood; you will run the risk of confounding together all grades of right or wrong, and of almost effacing the distinctions between good

men and bad men, or between men that are relatively good and men that are relatively bad; and, what is more than all, you will run the risk of violating the moral consciousness of men; — they *know* that, as thus broadly put, it is simply not true.

You can never make a mother, who, with devoted love, is giving up night and day for her babe, repent of that love, and look upon it as if it were an evidence of her total depravity. You can never make a friend who ventures his life for another friend, without second thought and without recompense, turn about and write down that act in his journal as being an evolution of total depravity.

My father used to say to me in regard to the better impulses of men who are unregenerated, "My son, those are nat'ral affections. There is no such thing as a good act unless it comes from gracious affections. It is not until an act is inspired and qualified by the Divine Spirit that it becomes good."

Well, I can say that as much as he said it; but I hold also that the Divine Spirit is universal. I hold that the physical man finds sufficient development and stimulus in the physical globe that is around about him; that the social man finds motives and stimulants enough in his social relationship; that the moral and spiritual man derives peculiar and special stimuli from the Divine Soul, which overhangs all things, and is dealing with all things; that that part of our nature which is essentially spiritual always comes from the inoculation of our souls by the Divine Soul; and that all of that in us which is good is as directly the fruit of the Divine Spirit, as all that is beautiful and fertile

in the fields is the fruit of the sun that shines upon it. Without summer there can be no harvest; and without the sun there can be no summer. The distinction which my father drew between natural and divine fruits of the Spirit in the soul was not well founded under such circumstances.

You will ask me, "Do you not believe that all men are sinful?" I do. "Do you think that there is any action of a man's heart that is perfect?" Relatively, no, I do not. "Do you believe that men are totally depraved?" I believe that men are sinful, and that they sin continually, to such an extent that they need repentance, change of heart, Divine help, so as to become new creatures in Christ Jesus. I believe in their need. But I do not undertake, with my plummet, to sound their depths, and to say that men are totally depraved, — that is, that each particular faculty has qualities which carry it out of such and such and such assignable limits.

THE ERROR OF THE UNITARIAN DOCTRINE.

There are advantages which come from a wise generalization on the subject of sinfulness; but there is much mischief in the generalization which has come down to us on that subject. We live in an age in which there is progress in various departments of knowledge, and in which men are looking at things from a different standpoint and with adaptations different from those of other times, which have largely lost their force now; a powerful reaction has been taking place. There are two elements coming in. The first is that reaction which assumes — I think unwisely,

and without proper observation — that men, so far from being sinful, only sin once in a while, just enough for variety; and that when placed in favorable circumstances men prefer to do right, and do do right. This is what is supposed to be the peculiar heresy of the Unitarian defection, though it has nothing to do with the Trinity or with the Atonement. In point of fact, that development carries with it a denial of the fundamental sinfulness of human life, and teaches that the qualities of a man's mind are essentially virtuous, and that when circumstances favor, for the most part the actions of men are right; thus, invariably and inevitably decreasing in men moral depth, the sense of the Divine nature, and intense spirituality, for which is substituted that poetic or mystic sensibility which has characterized all those sects that hold a loose doctrine on the subject of men's sinfulness.

Now, there is to this extent some truth in that view, — namely, that the faculties of men are by nature set to do right things. Anger is, in and of itself, both right and necessary. In and of themselves combativeness, and destructiveness, and self-esteem, and love of praise, and love between man and man, and benevolence, and the sense of beauty and taste, — these are intrinsically right; and single actions proceeding from these are right: but that is not their statement. Men are building in this life; we are rearing up our personality, and the question is not so much whether the original faculties in their innermost nature are right or not: the question is, When men are building a character through the action of these multiplex faculties, do they use them so that from day to day, and from week to

week, and from month to month, and from year to year, they are working out excellences of holiness?

A man, for example, takes his palette to paint. His colors are all right, they are broken right, and they are mixed right; but when he begins to make his picture, and put in his tints, and produce effects of light and shade, he may fail utterly. The instruments with which he works are right, there is not one of the pigments that is not perfect, and he puts them on with dextrous strokes; but when he combines them, and makes the foreground, the middle-ground, and the distance, and puts his objects of life into the picture, it is a botch. He uses right elements, but his picture is a failure. It is the power to compose with right elements right things, that he lacks.

The alphabet is all right; there is not an immoral element in it; but how many wicked books have been written! And music is right, in every note; and yet it is made to cater to the lusts and appetites and passions.

The alphabetic qualities in men are right enough; but the lives which they spell out with those alphabetic qualities, the habits which they form from them, the characters which result from them, are far from right. When we come to see what men produce with the right faculties with which they were endowed by God, we cannot but pronounce them to be sinful. And the sinfulness is all the more glaring because with right things men build wrong structures, because with right fundamental elements they evolve characters which will never fit them for their higher usefulness and happiness here, and still less for the spiritual life, and for communion with God, hereafter.

DIFFICULTY OF RIGHT LIVING.

I do not consider it to be an easy thing to live right. I look upon life as I look upon a child. If I did not believe in the all-bathing atmosphere of Providence and love, I could not wish to see another child born into the world, so great is the peril, and so wonderful, beyond all ordinary calculation, is the work that is going on. We hear the clanking of the loom, and we see the fabric that is woven and rolled upon the beam; but we do not see the pattern that is woven in it. We take a hand that is empty of skill, and we teach skill to that hand. We take a foot that is void of knowledge, and we teach that foot knowledge. A child has no acquaintance with qualities, and we teach him how to distinguish qualities. He is ignorant of construction, and we teach him how to construct. He goes on learning human nature, his own nature, his physical nature, with his appetites and passions, every one of which needs to have a special drill and education.

There are some twenty or thirty tendencies in the nature of a man; and each one of them is to be developed in accordance with right judgments; and he is to carry them in such equilibrium and proportions that through all his life there shall be right gradations of light and shadow. They are to be so controlled and managed that there shall be symmetry of form and true balance.

Who can drive one fiery horse with ease? To drive two is harder still. But, if fifteen or twenty are in a string, what man's hand is skillful enough or strong enough to hold the reins and keep them exactly to their paces?

Here is a man, born of woman, surrounded by adverse influences, biased, stimulated at times, depressed at other times, paralyzed with fear, intoxicated by inflamed feelings; and yet, the physical, the social, and the moral elements which operate upon him, he, as a creature of study, of business, or of public life, is to so adjust as to carry every part of himself in rectitude and in proportion. Things that are right enough in themselves are wrong oftentimes by their combinations, by excess or lack, by the uses to which they are put, by want of right composition or gradation. So that life is a thousand times more imperfect even than men think; so that the question of perfection is almost a question to make men laugh; so that the idea of sinlessness and true purity and absolute rectitude is absurd. And the more a man knows what powers are in him, how these powers are to be co-ordinated, and how they are all to be made to point towards the one Divine element of love; the more he comes to understand that he is a creature of two worlds, who is to look across this world to the other, and so order everything here that it shall land him there, — the more does he realize how vast the problem of life is. There is no other problem like it. There is no other problem that involves so much risk. There is no other problem the pressure for the solution of which is so intense. The question of furnishing a character for eternity and for companionship with God is one which transcends every other.

THE SCIENTIFIC CONFIRMATION OF BIBLE DOCTRINE.

Now, it is in connection with this problem or question that there comes up the scientific rebound which

is beginning to teach so much about the incarceration or incarnation of the spirit in the body. It is in this connection that we are learning more about the subject of heredity, or the transmission of qualities to ourselves from our ancestors, and of the effect of circumstances, of blood, of laws, and of institutions on the passions, the appetites, and the various elements of the mind. All these powerful external agents are coming in, and are producing a necessity for knowledge in scientific directions on the part of those who are to preach to the coming generations, — a knowledge which will enable them to meet the assertions or the skepticism of those who are bringing in new conditions of mental philosophy.

I have from early life followed closely the schools of science, and gathered such knowledge as I could on every side in respect to the actual condition of man, — with this addition: that I have, unlike the scientists, taken such material facts as have been evolved, and illuminated them by the light of Divine revelation, and looked at them from a higher standpoint. And I feel that in the times which are to come no man can be a faithful preacher to human nature, no man can discriminatingly preach of man's sins and sinfulness, who does not take into consideration the developments which are being made, and which are to be made; and I feel sure that there is nothing which will be found so admirably connected with science, and so parallel with it everywhere, as the Gospels of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think it will be discovered, when the best knowledges have been derived from the schools of science, that Jesus Christ was the greatest scientist of the world's

history; not in respect to lower forms of matter, but in respect to mind, which is unquestionably the very topmost thing in this creation of God upon the earth. I do not fear that science will sweep away any fundamental doctrine. On the other hand, I believe that all fundamental doctrines will be confirmed by science, and that by reason of the light which science throws upon them they will shine out more strongly than ever before.

INDIVIDUAL REPENTANCE.

I have spoken of Christ's method. He preached repentance everywhere, as John had preached it before him. And you will take notice how substantially these two preachers of repentance were alike. You will take notice also, that when men came to them asking, "What shall we do?" the answer was very different from that which we are prone to give. One answer was given to the soldiers, and another answer was given to the Pharisees. In each case the answer was adapted to the mind of the inquirer. The modern way, in preaching the doctrine of man's sinfulness, is to make an attempt to create an atmosphere in which all men shall feel a sort of down-pressing danger in consequence of universal and distributive guilt. When we get men into an intense state of moral alarm, we point them, as the saying is, to the great Refuge. But that was not the way with our Saviour. He sought to make all men discontented with their present state; he aroused in them a sense of its incompleteness and of its dangerousness; he preached repentance: but when the question came up, "What is repentance?" it was made *personal to*

each. He developed the new life on the basis of the old life; and it was something special in each particular person. A miser cannot repent as a spendthrift can. They are both inconsiderate and selfish, but the process of repentance with one is different from what it is with the other.

Generics never take hold of men. It is specifics that take hold of them. If you say to a man, "You are a sly old fellow," he shrugs his shoulders and does not care; but if you point him to the fact that you saw him prying open your letter and reading it, he is very much ashamed. If you say to a man, "I guess you are not very particular about how you get your money," he smiles, and rather thinks that, on the whole, it is not as bad as it might be; but if you say to him, bluntly, "You stole, and I can convict you of it," and refer him to the circumstances, that touches him. A specific charge is oftentimes effectual where a generic one is not.

A bunch of needles put together is as blunt as a board; but if you take each one out, and use it by itself, it is sharp, and pierces as all of them together will not.

If men are called to repentance in a bunch, they will be very apt to repent in a bunch, and their repentance will be very superficial in every way; but if they are called to repent individually, they will repent, if at all, individually, and their repentance will run along the line of facts related to their conduct and state.

You cannot repent of Adam's sin; you cannot repent of that part of your nature in whose creation you had no part; but you can repent of that which you are in

your lower, your middle, and your higher nature; you can repent of your delinquencies, negative and positive; you can repent of your wrong-doing; you can repent of the unspirituality of your whole life. Every man can take a measure of himself.

Now, there is every reason to believe that when the Master preached to the harlot, the harlot had her own special repentance; and that when he preached to the thief, the thief had his own special repentance. Repentance was the spirit of God wrestling in each individual's heart according to the nature, the character, and the development of that heart.

HOPEFULNESS OF CHRIST'S PREACHING.

Christ taught that all men were in need of regeneration, — of the new birth. Undoubtedly he taught repentance in such a way that it was believed to be an instantaneous work; or, that it was so connected with the lower human will that when a man was going wrong he could stop and go right. He undoubtedly insisted upon it that it was a thing which was to take place at once. He said to the thief, "Steal no more"; to the lecherous, licentious man, "Be lecherous and licentious no more"; to the cruel man, "Cease your cruelty"; to the drunkard, "Drink no more"; to the godless man, "Think of God, and reverence him." Repentance, according to his teaching, was an instantaneous work in this sense: that there was a point of time in which there was a *change* from the design of wrong-doing to the design of right-doing.

He preached, also, that the Divine power was indispensable to this change; but he preached it as a

matter of hope, of inspiration, and of courage to men. He taught that men were in great need of this Divine power; but he represented it to be to them what a surgeon is to a wounded man. If your leg is broken, you cannot set it; if an artery is severed, you cannot stanch the blood; and you cannot live unless the surgeon comes. He is a benefactor and a helper. And when Christ taught the necessity of the dependence of men upon God, he preached so as to stimulate men in the direction of their necessity for the Divine. The effect of his preaching was to tear up self-conceit by the roots. It was to give man a sense of his power to exalt himself by the aid of the Spirit. It was to teach him where the remedy was, and that he could have it if he wanted it. The Spirit is always ready; and the drift of Christ's teaching was that men needed a new birth, and that, needing a new birth, they needed the Divine Spirit; and that the Divine Spirit was waiting to be gracious to them. It was always on the side of hope and effort, and not on the side of casting anchor and waiting, that Christ taught. From his teaching men would naturally deduce the fact of their absolute need of higher succor than their own; but they would also come to this through knowledge of sorrow for special sins, and repentance of them, and thus be encouraged to seek the higher help and really help themselves.

THE GERMINANT VALUE OF MORALITY.

Now, your preaching of sinfulness should never take away from men a sense of the value of morality. It should modify their extravagant ideas of its value; but to tell a man that nothing is good unless it is the fruit

of an after-converted state, is to subvert the very elements on which you build, and the very instincts to which you appeal. The whole Bible, from beginning to end, takes it for granted that there are in men separate notions of truth, of honor, of justice, of rectitude, by which they are to compare, to judge, and to accept; and if you take away from men the thought that in morality is found the basis on which you can build the higher life, you destroy their courage and paralyze their effort.

Men say, "Is not morality good?" I say it is good. "Is it enough?" No; no!

When the vine first throws out leaves in spring they are great, broad leaves; and men say, "There, those are fine leaves; do you tell me that they are good for nothing?" No, I do not tell you any such thing; but I say that it will be a good while before you will make any wine out of them. What are leaves good for? Why, to make blossoms. What are blossoms good for but to smell good? They are good for evolving the final form of fruit. Leaves and blossoms are relatively good, but their purpose is not fulfilled until they have developed something better.

Now, morality is a seed which is relative to something higher, which it is to produce. It is that out of which is to grow the better states of men. It should therefore be precious in men's sight. I would not say to young men in my parish, It does not matter whether you are good or bad, truthful or untruthful, just or unjust, pure or impure. On the contrary, I say, Your morality is good so far as it goes. I say to you, Love God in such a way that your love shall in-

flame your whole spiritual nature; but if you will not rise to that, the highest and truest conception of manhood, then at least do the next thing below that. If you will not do that, I beseech of you, do right things even from selfish motives. It is better to do right things from feelings of personal interest than to do wrong things. When a man begins on this ground, he *begins,* although the beginning is but as a grain of mustard-seed. It is not enough to end with, but it is enough to begin with. A man who begins at the lower foundations of motive is in a situation such that you can inspire him and lift him higher and higher. In dealing practically with men you are obliged to act on that principle or method of dealing with him. You can never, by revival after revival, no matter how powerful it may be, take a coarse, rude nature, whose inward states and outward habits are those of sin and sinfulness, and bring him at once into a condition of high spiritual vision and of glorious Christian development. What can you do? You can transform his purposes at once; you can set them on inward elements of character; but a whole life's work is to be employed to carry that character up, little by little, and little by little.

Men are like vagabond boys in the street. They are lying, thieving, dirty, ragged, uncombed rascals; and they who love them go out after them; and going out after them, they never take the children that are rosy, sweet-faced and cherry-lipped, well taken care of at home. They may love these most; but they are after the sinful; and they take the little ragamuffins and bring them into the reformatory house, and wash their

skin, and take off their rags, and clothe them aright, and persuade them, in one way and another, to submit themselves to the necessary restraint, and abide in the asylum, and become scholars, until at last, after weeks and months of instruction and drill, and after various experiences under the pressure of moral influences, the boy says, "I am going to make a man of myself." When he says this, so far as his determination is concerned he is converted. He has made up his mind to live a different life; but the object which he has before him is not yet accomplished.

Now, transfer that idea to the case of a man in a congregation. This man is converted. He has been living on a lower plane of moralities, and he makes up his mind that he will rise to a higher plane; but has he reached that higher plane? Has he developed in himself the spiritual knowledge towards which he aspires? Has he wrought out the corresponding elements, social and moral, which belong to true manhood? No, but he has made a start for it. He has laid the foundation of the building, and it will rise gradually, through various stages of evolution and care, until the last perfect form is attained.

If you preach to rude congregations you must do as missionaries do. When missionaries come home they generally have a less opinion of theology and a greater opinion of the Bible than almost any other class. They find in missionary life how wonderful are the adaptations of Scripture to the treatment of men in lower conditions. They find that there is nothing that requires so much patience, so much charity, and so much waiting, as human nature in its primitive states. They

find that nothing is slower in unfolding than undeveloped men. Men are so extremely low, so very imperfect, so thoroughly sinful, that when they are preached to, and they turn about and begin to do right, it will be at a point very far down in the scale; and it is only step by step, gradually, that the Divine Spirit can be developed in them. It is long afterwards that they reach the higher life. After death they will be perfected, but not before.

OPPOSING DANGERS OF GENERIC PREACHING.

Let me say one more thing in this direction, namely: that in preaching the doctrine of sinfulness to men there is danger of overaction. It works in two ways; producing discouragement on the one side, and presumption on the other.

Have you never heard men say, in a rallying, bantering manner, "O, well, of course I did wrong; but you know it is human to err. To be sure, what I did was wrong; but all men are sinners, and I am one of them"? There springs up from this preaching a sort of impression in the mind that a man is a sinner anyhow. "Yes," they say, "of course he is, everybody is, a sinner. We are all going along together. We keep step one with another." Such a generic method of presenting the doctrine of sinfulness tends to destroy conscience in men, and they seem to think that when they sin they are walking in accordance with the constitution of things, and that whatever may be the mischiefs resulting from their action they are no more responsible for them than a sour-apple tree is for having sour apples, or than a thorn-tree is for having thorns. If you con-

tinue preaching, "All men are sinful, *all men are sinful*, ALL MEN ARE SINFUL, O, ALL MEN ARE SINFUL," they will all of them justify your opinion, but not one of them will feel sinful because he lives as he does, any more than I feel so because my hair was naturally brown, or than you do because your hair was naturally black.

Yet, as I shall show at another time, this generic doctrine of universal sinfulness has its place, and is a power, in the active work of the ministry; but after all, you must specialize. Otherwise men will go to one or the other extreme, — that of presumption or that of discouragement. Sensitive natures will brood the matter inwardly, and will feel such a sensibility to sin, and will have such a sense of their own vileness, as shall take away from them all spring and all hope, and really leave the mind almost paralyzed. I have heard of not a few cases of this kind. I have known of persons (for instance, women) who, without any sense of special sinning, were made unhappy and wellnigh insane from a general impression of their own sinfulness. I have one in my mind now.

There are women who are martyrs. If there are what may be called Protestant Saints, I think they are the women who forbear a loving wifehood, and go into a sister's family to be a mother to children that they have not themselves borne, to take care of them, and to labor for them, loving them and nourishing them and sacrificing self for them, asking no name and no reward outside. And yet, I have known women of that sort who had such a withering sense of their unworthiness that they hardly dared to raise their eyes

to God because they felt so sinful, and had such an impression that their life was a waste. Sometimes under such circumstances they are even demented with this intense conviction of sinfulness. There are cases in which persons have such a sense of their own inherent wickedness, and of the wickedness of every action which springs from the qualities of their nature, that their very aspiration is paralyzed. And it is an awful perversion of the truth where it is preached so as to produce such results. Phenomena like these are, I think, among the most piteous exhibitions that the world can look upon.

You must therefore beware of preaching generics in one way, so as to make men callous and presumptuous, and, in another way, so as to make them oversensitive, and drive them into despair.

You are so to discriminate in preaching that every person shall have his own character, his own tendencies, his own peculiarities specialized to him. You are to preach so that every man shall, as it were, be called by name; so that his attention shall be drawn to his own special life-work; so that he shall be led to root up all the poisonous weeds, and prune all the right plants or tendencies in his nature; so that he shall aim at the full development and symmetrizing of his whole character in the direction of hopefulness, of trust, of aspiration, and of a sense of the Divine power; so that he can work out his own salvation, because it is God that is working in him, to will and to do of his good pleasure.

As to the question whether it is best to preach sins or sinfulness, I say, Both, — sinfulness in a measure,

but sins continually, sins all the time, so far as you take that side in your preaching. Sinfulness is generic; sins are specific; and although every man needs to know that his whole nature is low and requires Divine inspiration and re-birth, yet, that which will touch men most sensibly, and arouse them most effectually, and bring them to a new life most certainly, is that which is specific.

SPECIFICATION OF CHARACTERS.

The next question, which I shall not more than mention this afternoon, is this: not, What is sinful? but, What are the modes by which you can make men conscious of sinfulness? For yourselves, study the doctrine of sin in all its ramifications; but when you come to preach, the distinctive thought with you should be, "I know that men are sinful; but they do not feel it: how shall I make them understand it?"

Here is a man that sits and smiles under your preaching with the serenest contentment in regard to himself. You say that Man is depraved, — yes, if you please, *totally* depraved; you say much (I care not how much) that is condemnatory of Man; and yet he is smiling and contented and happy. How are you to reach that particular man with such a sense of sin as to bring him down?

Here sits another man in the congregation, and hears you preach on the subject of sin; and he is no more affected than the rocks on Mount Sinai were when the law was given to Moses. His heart is as cold as it can be; and he says, "Our minister is doing that thing

very well to-day, — *very well.*" How are you going to assail that man in such a way as to bring a moral consciousness of personal sin home to him? Must you wait for that mysterious influence of the spirit which comes with revivals, and which is likened to the wind, which "bloweth where it listeth," so that you "cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth"? Is there to be a second moral deluge which shall come without any instrumentality on your part? Is there not a way in which you can preach sin so that a man hearing you shall say, "I am a sinner, not on account of my undivided dividend of Adam, but on account of my special disposition and life"?

There are others who are equally devoid of feeling. They live in the sweet amenities of life. They are too amiable and gentle and polite to deny anything that you say from the pulpit. No matter what you say, they smile. If you say to them, "You are a great sinner," they say, "Yes, I know I am." "It is your duty to repent." "Certainly, certainly." "Don't you think the time has come when you should begin?" "I do."

It is with men as the Western Methodist minister said it was with grain. Said he, "Grain that leans away from me I can cut: it is grain that leans toward me which the sickle slips over, and which I cannot cut."

Now, in going out into your congregations, your work will be to specialize, not simply single sins nor single faculties, but characters. Your work will be like that of an engineer, who must learn general principles, but who, when he goes into the field to

survey, to build, or to bombard, must substitute, for his foregoing education in generics, practice in specialties.

On the true method of doing that work I shall, by the help of God, attempt to throw some light in a future lecture.

IX.

THE SENSE OF PERSONAL SIN.

March 11, 1874.

THIS afternoon I am to speak to you as to the best procedure in your ministry by which to inspire men with a sense of their personal sinfulness.

CONVICTION, TO CARRY ASPIRATION.

Why is it necessary to inspire such a feeling? For what purpose is it to be done? It is only that your people may be incited to reformation. The use of preaching to men the doctrine of sin is that they may be led away from sin. The test of right preaching on this subject is not its agreement with any preconceived theory: it is its agreement with the fundamental sympathies and laws of the human soul, manifesting itself in the renunciation of sins, or in an effort to renounce them, and in the betaking of one's self to the higher life. I say that it were worse than cruel to preach to men their lost condition, and their guiltiness, and their corruption before God, if that were all.

Human life itself sets us the example. If men walk the street heedlessly, thrusting themselves against little

children or unprotected women, we rebuke them, because their rudeness can be corrected and should be corrected ; but who ever rebukes a man with a shrunken leg for halting and causing inconvenience in the street ? By the consent of all mankind, we are silent on that subject.

If a man be found in anger, or in any other unworthy feeling, making up hideous faces at persons, we rebuke him because he is doing that which is improper, and because it can be changed ; but if a man be paralyzed, or if he were born with a hideously ugly face which he is obliged to carry all his life, we never say anything about that, because he cannot correct it.

It is the correctableness of sinful conduct and life that gives the whole reason for dwelling upon this subject. Therefore, the sense of sin inspired in men is only the reverse, and should be the concomitant, of a sense of aspiration. It is our business so to discourse to our people that they shall feel not only a sense of wrong and wrong-doing, but a corresponding sense of right and right-doing ; it is our business to preach to them so as that out of our preaching shall come that influence which shall impel them in the right direction from the wrong direction.

EXPERIENCE THE TRUE TEXT TO PREACH FROM.

This is the fundamental idea on which I construct my remarks to you this afternoon ; and in the first place I assert, that it is comparatively useless, that frequently it is worse than useless, to preach to men of their sins in no other way than by a retinue of texts, and by statements of the authority of the Word of

God; because that part of God's Word which is authoritative is that which lives consciously in us. You must translate into men's actual experience that which is taught by letter in the Word of God before you can appeal to it and make them feel that they have violated it. For a book is a book, and but a book. If it be a book that declares the Divine will and the Divine judgment, far be it from me to say that there is no use in employing it; but I declare that it is auxiliary, that it is interpretative. The work must first be developed in a man's own understanding and in his moral consciousness; and then his experience and sensibility must be *corroborated* by the declarations of the Word of God; but mere textual preaching, a mere array of texts so long that it looks like a sinner's funeral procession, will not convict men. It will teach them what the Bible says; but what we want is to make them *feel.*

Generic preaching lies under precisely the same conditions. As all rivers empty into the ocean, so all specifics will first or last empty into generics. All facts and all personal instances of special dispositions and acts in the individual are materials which every man, if he has any philosophical tendency, finally generalizes, and forms into some sense of disposition; but to preach the generic first makes it very difficult for men to specialize, whereas to preach the specific first will by and by lead men of themselves to generalize.

Therefore it is that the true preaching of sinfulness is the preaching of individual and personal sins. In order to preach truly, it is far better that you should

prepare your way, not by any abstract statement of law or rule of conduct, but, as far as possible, by concrete statements.

You never could make a person who was born in a village, who had seen nothing of pictures, who, finding in himself a blind impulse to paint, had worked his way up so far as to paint a lion-sign for a tavern, and who was praised for his skill by all his neighbors,— you never could make such a person believe that he was not an artist. All the abstract arguments in the world would not convince him of this; but bring a genuine painting from out of the French school, of a lion in an African desert, and set it down in his shop by the side of his crude banner-picture, and go away without saying a word, and the man coming in of a sudden, and looking at the one and at the other, will step back, and say, "Ass! I thought that picture of mine was a lion, but I have found out that I am an ass,— that is all. I will never paint another picture." He has been resisting statements of his well-meaning friends to the effect that there was not very much artistic skill displayed in his picture, and has looked upon them as attempting to "repress genius," and he would not believe anything that they said about it; but the moment there is put before him a real thing, an ideal picture, he lays aside his notion that he is an artist, and now all the world could not produce the opposite impression in his mind. What he needs now is to be buoyed up, and encouraged to think that, with self-denial and perseverance, in time he can attain even to that excellence which he sees exhibited in the picture which throws his own work so entirely in the shade.

Now, in simply preaching to men that they are selfish, that they are proud, that they are vain, and that they are without holiness, you cannot produce much effect upon them. Well, yes, they all suppose that they are so; the Bible says it, the Catechism echoes it, and the minister re-echoes it. It is the general opinion of the whole neighborhood that they are all sinful; that they are sold under sin; that they are in bondage to sin. This is iterated and reiterated, until by and by people say, "Yes, we are all sinners; none of us are clad in holiness; we are all under the wrath and curse of God. But how much do they feel it? What reality is there in it to them?

THE GENERIC MADE POTENT BY THE SPECIFIC.

As I shall have occasion to show by and by, these forms, these limitations, these statements, these definitions, being filled up by vital personal experience, become of immense potency and usefulness; but alone, without any filling up, they are of very little validity.

If a man can be shown an act of heroic benevolence, and if then his own daily dripping selfishness can be put right alongside of it, he will hardly need a sermon. The two things will preach to each other.

If a man, full of avarice and bound up in stinginess, has presented before him the very opposite traits of character in all grace and beauty, the ideal which he gets, the impression which is made upon him, the practical development of the right which he sees, becomes the revelator of the wrong, and gives him such a potent sense of that wrong as can be given to him by no argument and no merely philosophical statement.

By and by, when, by such a comparison, you have prepared a man's mind so that at last he is brought to an understanding of his condition, of his lack, of the reason of his deficiency, of his limitations, and of his sins, then it is a very different thing to preach that men generally are sinful; it becomes an idea with a new meaning. The true way of preaching is not to preach the general sinfulness of men, and then leave them to find out their sins, but to open up to them their sins, so that they may see them by a comparison of what they are with the ideal standard, and then bring them from the consciousness of personal transgression up to the highest generic view.

SCRIPTURAL *versus* THEOLOGICAL PREACHING.

In preaching these elements, men must follow the Scripture method, as distinguished from the theological method. I do not wish to speak evil of dignities, nor of customs, nor of the wisdom of men; but woe be to any generation that is not better for the power that it has to differ from that which went before; and woe be to any generation whose principle, in looking back upon great men, great thoughts, and great developments, which have prepared the way for later generations, is to look upon them only as upon idols, to worship them. It is a fact that one set of men having lived makes the state of the next set larger, and enables them to go further in the line of development than their fathers did.

Now, I think there could be no such cruelty as to preach to this generation as Jonathan Edwards preached to his. Not that there were not magnificent

strains in his preaching; but there was such a sense of the Divine authority, such a sense of the rights of Divinity, and such a sense of the sinfulness of sin, as amounted, not always, but frequently, to a species of inhumanity toward men because they were sinful. And there has been since his time, and since the times of other great men who preached revival sermons, what I may call a savage way of preaching man's sinfulness, — which is not the Scriptural way. The Bible method of preaching the sinfulness of man is the parental way. The Scriptures are full of human feeling; they are full of considerateness; they are full of gentleness; they are full of variations of approach; they are full of differing modes of development; and what the pulpit needs more than anything else in preaching man's sinfulness is the feeling, on the part of those that preach, that they are joined to man by his sinfulness the same as by his sorrow, and that they are to be helpful to him, and to feel toward him as a father feels toward his son, or as a mother feels toward her daughter.

SYMPATHY WITH SINNERS.

It is not the man who has the most profound sense of the glory of God; it is not the man who has the most acute sensibility to the sinfulness of sin; it is the man who carries in his heart something of the feeling which characterized the atoning Christ, — it is he that is the most effectual preacher. It is the man who has some such sorrow for sin that he would rather take penalty upon himself than that the sinner should bear it. It is not the man who is merely seeking the vindi-

cation of abstract law, or the recognition of a great, invisible God; it is the man who is seeking in himself to make plain the manifestation of God as a Physician of souls, sorrowing for them, calling to them, and yearning to do them good. It is the compassion of men who, while they know how to depict the dangerousness of sin, oftentimes its meanness, and always its violation of Divine law, yet recognize that they can never bring men so easily to an admission of their sinfulness by representing God's wrath and producing in them a feeling of terror, as by holding up before them the Divine compassion and kindness.

"Come here!" says a father to his child; "you played truant, it seems." "No, I did n't," says the boy. "You did n't? Now, don't undertake to deceive me; you did! You see that whip; you know what is coming; own that you did it." "I did n't do it." "Well, how came you not to be at school?" "I was sent on an errand." "Who sent you?" "The schoolmaster."

Suppose, instead of approaching the boy in anger, and driving him into a succession of lies through fear, the man had called him to him, and said: "Have you had a pleasant time, my son? You have been weak to-day. I am very sorry for you. I know you were tempted; and you gave way to the temptation. If I had been with you I could have helped you. Perhaps I can help you some now. I am very sorry that you did that. I don't mean to punish you; but I want to help you out of this weakness."

All the time the boy's tears are running down his cheeks; he does not deny the charge; and when his father goes on to point out the indecorum of which he

is guilty, the ruin to which it will lead him if he persists in it, and the bad example which he has set in the school, he feels worse and worse; and when finally the father asks, "What will your mother think of it?" he boo-hoos right out. He cannot bear to have his mother told; and the father says, "If you will try to do better, I won't say anything about it"; and he is exceedingly grateful to his father; and the next time he is tempted to play truant all his best feelings rise up to hinder him; and all in him that is generous and loving says, "I don't want to do it."

In the one case the father came to the boy with wrath and penalty, and the boy hardened himself and resisted. In the other case, the father came to the boy with the same charge, but he did it in such a way as to bring him into a condition in which his best moral feelings were roused against temptation.

Ought we not, then, to gather some lessons from things that are taking place through the providence of God in every Christian household, in every household that is controlled by Christian affections; and, above all, by that supremest of all inspirations, love? Are they not, in some remote sense, revelations of the Divine plan and the Divine methods? When we turn from these things to the New Testament, and see the way of our Lord, may we not understand that one mode of preaching to men so as to bring them to a sense of their sinfulness is to preach to them, I will not say excusatorily, I will not say in a manner which will make sin seem less sinful, but so that they shall not think of you as standing over them like a sheriff who has a writ to serve upon them, or who has a sentence of execution

which is to take them to the block? You are to preach so that men shall feel that the things which you say to them are spoken out of kindness and love. I do not think that ministers quite enough put themselves out of their profession.

KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY TO SYMPATHY.

A boy at the age of about ten or eleven years rather turns to the subject of the Christian ministry. He rather selects his company with the view that he may be a minister. He rather thinks he shall be. He knows that his mother is praying for it all the time, and he would like to fulfill her hopes. He reads good books, and goes with good boys, and is a good boy himself. When he goes to school, he is a model boy. He does not have any association with bad boys. When he goes to the academy, he is still rather remarkable as a good boy; and by this time he begins to know it. When he reaches the college, he goes right into the college prayer-meeting, and is soon made a deacon in the college church. He walks in the ways of the wise, and really does not know much about human life outside. He has very little acquaintance with what are the troubles of bad and high-spirited young men in college. And as soon as he gets to the theological seminary he is put to bed with Emmons and all the other excellent saints of New England. He lives with them. And when he is ordained as a minister he goes to all the associational meetings, and to all the councils, and is everywhere in close relations with his own kind and class. So it comes to pass that he is one of the most exemplary of all the men that go into the pulpit. But, really, he knows next to nothing

about the way in which ordinary men live in this world. He cannot put himself in anybody's place.

Jesus descended from the loftiest position, took upon himself the form of a man, humbled himself, became a servant, and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, — or, as we should put it in our modern phrase, the gallows. He walked among men from the highest to the lowest, and made himself personally acquainted with every trial and sin. He was tempted in every faculty, and yet without sin. He knew what was in men, and he knew how to make allowance for them. He was their High-Priest, symbolized by the Jewish high-priest. Like ourselves, he knew what human infirmities were, and he had compassion upon those who were out of the way. This was the peculiarity of Christ, — that he sympathized with sinners.

With how many young professional ministers is it the case that they do not know the great round of weakness and infirmity, as well as guilt, which prevails in the community! How men are born into life, — with what limitations; with what different degrees of opportunity; with what biases; with what partial education, wrong education, or excellent education! Some men are born with might and power of will and passion almost irresistible. Some men go mourning all their life long that their stream of success runs so slender, and is so full of shallows and sand-bars. Some men, in their feelings, are swept as leaves in autumn by the tempest; and some men never know what a breeze of feeling is. Some men are invincible by money, and others are vincible by it. Some men, in their pride, are like snow-capped mountains, grand, high, white,

cold, solitary. Some men are born with melancholy, and some with hope. Some men are happy in their associations and avocations, and others find themselves entangled by false alliances, by mis-partnerships, by ten thousand influences from which they are struggling to break away. Some men are all the time condemning themselves, and others are all the time overestimating themselves. There is a great whirl and round of human nature into which men are thrown, and where the strife is intense, and the result doubtful. Some men sin and hide their sin, and others sin and do not know how to hide it. Some, having sinned, sink down under a sense of shame, and some are buoyed up by a feeling of pride. Some, when cast out by reason of their sins, are conscious that they are better than many who are kept in. Some who are doomed to poverty feel that they are more deserving of prosperity than those who have it but do not earn it. The great round of life is full of mistakes and of mysterious influences, against which men stagger and strive, in various degrees. And the man who occupies the position of a minister of the gospel should have such a realizing knowledge and sense of human want and weakness and wickedness, that the thought of these things would bring tears of sympathy to his eyes.

If one in this spirit reads the New Testament, and sees how God deals with sin and with sinners, he will find no letting down of the ideal of goodness as against sin; he will find no lowering of the standard of holiness as against sinfulness. That ideal and that standard must be kept up forever. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." No matter what comes, keep the standard

and the ideal high. But, after all, working with that ideal should be full of patience and sweetness. Your sorrow for the people to whom you preach should be greater than their sorrow for themselves can be. You are to make yourself, therefore, in the place of Christ, a sufferer for sufferers, sent to bear sin in its pain and penalty, without its guilt.

There are unsuspected influences in the air. Men are afraid to carry their consciences into their life. This you ought to understand; I think you will be convinced of it when you come to preach; and I believe it will help you to preach so that men will be made to feel their weakness and sinfulness and infirmities.

CONVENTIONAL AND REAL SINS.

Men in the community at large are seldom trained with a universal conscience. In general, they are trained with what might be called a conventional conscience,—a conscience which is largely ecclesiastical. There are, in the first place, conventional sins. The church has its organization and its house of worship; and men feel that it would be a great sin to treat this edifice as they would an ordinary structure. Especially are men trained in the Roman and Episcopal and in other denominational churches to feel that there is a sanctity in the building itself. And there is no reason why we should not suppose that Divine grace inheres in stone and plaster as much as in bread and wine. So men are taught to feel that lack of respect toward a venerable church is next to contempt of God.

A man walks half-way up the aisle in a church, absent-minded, with his hat on, and whistling, and coming

to his senses checks himself, and thinks he is a great sinner. He has whistled in church! He has worn his hat in the house of God! I should say, young gentlemen, that you had better not wear your hat in any house; and that whistling in a dwelling-house is always bad manners; but whistling in a church is considered by many as a gross offense. And this man, going home, says to his wife, "I really feel bad, my dear"; and he tells her how he wore his hat and whistled in church; and she exclaims, "Why, that was shocking! I hope nobody saw you." He is thoroughly ashamed of himself, and feels guilty besides. The next morning he gets up, and understanding that there is a man in the neighborhood who wants a horse, he thinks he will sell him his, — which is a good horse, but is slightly lame on account of a contracted hoof. The lameness does not show, however, except when he is put to hard work. So the man sells his horse. He knows that it is unsound, yet he dexterously conceals the fact, and the bargain is consummated. Now does he go back to his wife and say, "O my dear, I am a great sinner"? Not he!

From this you will see what I mean by a conventional sin, as standing over against a real sin.

THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

In that way, you shall find that men are often very conscientious about Sunday; that is, strict Puritans. They will not do any work on Sunday, nor even on Saturday night. On Sunday they will not allow any newspapers to be read in their families. Neither will they allow any except "Sunday books" to be read.

Their children must go to meeting in the morning, and, if possible, again in the afternoon. There must be nothing done of a secular nature until after the sun has gone down below the horizon. One minute and it is irreverent, it is breaking Sunday, to tell a funny story. The next minute down goes the sun, and then the story may be told. The very persons who are thus particular about observing Sunday and fast-days will, even on Sunday, sit and discuss their neighbors' faults without a shadow of the feeling that they are striking a thousand fathoms deeper into sin than they would be if they were to "break" Sunday.

I admire Sunday, I admire the old Jewish Sabbath, and I think New England owes much to it. One of the sweetest of my reminiscences is that of the old breezy hill-top in Litchfield on Sunday; of the Sunday sun, and the Sunday birds, and the Sunday shimmering Mount Tom, and the Sunday elm-trees, and the Sunday scenes, some of which were touching, and some ludicrous. As I recall it, Sunday was a great moral power. But how about uncharitableness? How about avarice? How about deliberate selfishness in ten thousand customary ways? How about anger? How about the spirit of petty revenge? How about such things as these, which go right to the root of moral character, and are like rust on steel, eating to its very substance?

And, nowadays, what is the public sentiment of the church? What is the sentiment of those who meet each other in church communion? What is the sentiment of persons who sit over against each other at the tea-table, and delight themselves in serving up their fellow-men, and enjoy the little repast of this fault and

that suspicion? How many people feel that the want of heart, the want of love and tenderness, the want of benevolence, indicates a lack of that higher love which makes God God? How many persons are there who feel that these sins of disposition amount to immeasurably more than customary and ecclesiastical sins? Does the pulpit do its duty in this matter? Do men who preach sufficiently enlighten their congregations concerning it?

How is it in the matter of quarreling? There are parishes in New England where men have had quarrels which they watered and pruned and nourished for twenty years; and it would seem to be their pride to hand them down as a legacy to their posterity. In the West, when men quarrel, they knock each other down and roll over, and get up and take a drink, and that is the end of it; but in New England men do not dare to take the law into their own hands and settle their difficulty, but they *remember* it. They carry the insult, the wrong, the grudge, the hatred; and it breaks out into evil speaking, backbiting, and all manner of little mean retaliations. Men who cherish bitter animosities toward each other yet go to the same communion-table, and sit under the same preaching, from ten years to ten years, and all the time they do not feel that Mount Sinai, if it could speak, would thunder at them; but they are talking about their hopes, and their hopes, and their hopes!

Now, I want to know if any abstract preaching of sinfulness, and letting alone the real and specific sins of the commonest sort, can be a faithful and fruitful preaching of sinfulness?

RELATIVE PROPORTIONS OF DIFFERENT SINS.

More than that, there is a want of perspective in men's conscience or sense of sin, so that they overestimate some offenses and underestimate others. For instance, you will find persons who, if they sit down on the Bible, suddenly spring up with a most overwhelming sense of sin; or, having neglected some minor duty, they will groan over that as though it were a most serious transgression. In their minds there is no distinction between sins in regard to their magnitude. They have no sense of the relative proportions of sins, and of their effects in the community. Therefore men frequently indulge themselves in the most ruinous courses without compunction, and then make a great account of little peccadillos, manifesting the intensest contrition concerning them.

There is great need, therefore, of maintaining in the minds of men a clear insight of the nature of sins, and thus giving them a true standard by which to judge of sinfulness.

RELATIVITY OF PREACHING.

That leads me to say, next, that there are very few persons who are so round, so all-sided, that any part of them is a true test of right or wrong. Taking society at large, you will find that it breaks itself up into groups or classes of men, that only one or two of the faculties of the human mind are employed by each class, and that these become the tests.

For example, you will find that some men have an intellectual test. It is the agreement between this or

that course of conduct and the rule or the law. By nature or by training almost the entire sensibility of their minds has been centered in intellectual processes, and ideas control them. So, when you preach in a large city, if you are an able man and draw men toward you, you will find in your congregation a great many who, while you are touching this man, that man, and the other man, will themselves never be touched. You will appeal to their heart, to their manhood, to their sense of shame, to their better feelings, but you will not reach them. By and by, however, there will come a man who will preach a different kind of sermon in your pulpit. The majority of the people will say, "I hope you are not going to have that man exchange with you often. I do not know why, but it seems to me that his sermon was the driest that I have listened to for many months." But these men of ideas will say, "I never had anything come so near to me as that man's sermon. I do not understand how it was, but he made me tremble." The center in them was not moral at all; it was intellectual. The tests by which they were accustomed to judge of right and wrong were purely intellectual; and therefore they were struck with that sermon and affected by it.

You must make up your mind, as ministers of the gospel, that you are to strike everybody, in your preaching. A minister must be like a magazine, provided with a varied armament. If you are going to batter down a fort, your battering guns must be very heavy. If you are going, on the other hand, to pick off men at a great distance, you must get telescopic rifles. If you are going to shoot water-fowl, you must take a heavy shot-gun. If, as an ornithologist, you are going to

shoot small birds, you must take a small shot-gun and small shot. The kind of game which you are going to hunt will determine the sort of gun, the caliber of the arms, which you will require. Because you are a man of taste, you must not preach taste all the time; because you are a man of feeling, you must not preach feeling all the time; and because you are a man of conscience, you must not preach conscience all the time.

MANY ROADS TO CONSCIENCE.

Young men, however much it may tax you to think, you *must* think, if you are going to be ministers. There must be that in your preaching which shall take hold of the men to whom you preach. There will be different classes of minds in your congregations, and you must adapt your preaching to those different classes. There will be those who will be touched more by intellectual preaching than by anything else, and there will be those whom intellectual preaching will scarcely touch. There will be those who will respond to an appeal to the conscience, and there will be those who will not be at all affected by such an appeal. There will be those who can be more easily reached through taste than through any other channel; and you will reach them effectually by showing them that they are out of harmony with the universe. There will be men whom you cannot touch by appealing to their emotion of benevolence and kindness, but whom you can touch by appealing to their conscience. An abstract sense of right and wrong is a strong constitutional center in many persons, and they are at once overwhelmed and oppressed when they are made to feel that they have

violated the principles of rectitude. But a practical sermon, which is called "a sermon to the conscience," and which screws the conscience down and down and down, and wellnigh crushes it, will leave a large part of your congregation without feeling, or with very slight feeling, because that is not the point where they determine right and wrong. Conscience in them has never been trained or brought out. There are men whose whole life determines right and wrong by its relations to kindness or unkindness.

I know, and you know, great, large, front-headed men, men with high foreheads, bountiful men, men with large features, who cannot bear cruelty or anything that looks toward it. To them anything that hurts is wrong. They interfere with family discipline, saying, "Now, don't, don't punish that child." If it is a merchant's clerk that has gone wrong, they say, "You had better look at the young man more kindly, and give him another chance." They interfere with the execution of the laws. Anything that is cruel, or that gives pain, they look upon with disallowance; and anything that is benevolent receives their approbation. Kindness is the test-center with them. Show them that sin is unbenevolent and you have them. If you cannot show them this, it may be a violation of God's law, and they will wink at it; it may be an insult to the majesty of Heaven, and they will encourage it; it may be sending men down to perdition, and they will not look with great disfavor upon it; but show them that it is harmful to living men, and give them instances of its harmfulness, and you will touch them so that tears will run from their eyes, and they will begin to say, "Well, now,

sin is sin, and must be put a stop to"; but the moral sense of such men is in sensibility to benevolence, and not in conscience nor in the intellect.

Some men will be far more likely to be convicted if you show them that their life has been unbecoming and inconsistent with the higher forms of manhood; that it has not been chivalric nor heroic.

Here is a man of pride. He has been accustomed to judge of himself and of his relatives by that element; but his conscience works with his pride, — for, let me tell you, there is not one man in a thousand of average men whose conscience is pure and simple. Everybody, almost, has some faculty that is auxiliary to conscience. You cannot touch conscience in the majority of men except through some auxiliary faculty which opens to it. One man is touched in his conscience through the understanding; another, through benevolence, as I have already said; another when you have convicted his ideals. In some cases conscience lies at the bottom of a man's self-esteem; and if you reach it you must reach it by arguments addressed to his estimation of himself. Others have conscience so allied to shame that if you rouse it you must first rouse up their sense of shame, and make them feel that they have violated that which is praiseworthy. You cannot touch their conscience in any other way.

A man is a thief. He breaks open houses. He sets fire to barns. He murders men. Among his companions he does not feel the first qualm of sensibility. He is arrested, and brought into the village where all his old friends reside. He is thrown into jail. The whole community are full of indignation. One after

another of his former acquaintances come and look in on him as though he were a wild beast. He begins to fell the concentrated sense of the indignation and blame of the whole people. His love of praise is very strong; and now, under the influence of detection and disclosure and the public sentiment of the community, he begins to have a feeling of remorse. He did not feel remorseful at all in the midst of his confederates; but when he was brought where shame operated upon him his conscience waked up, and being waked up by such help and stimulus, it became mighty in him.

You cannot get at men's consciences unless you know what are the auxiliary powers by which you can reach them. In some fear is auxiliary; in others veneration is auxiliary; and, what may seem strange to you, but what is as true as that you live, in still others taste is auxiliary.

A musician who is exceedingly irascible, and sensitive to discord, will understand how, if he is at discord with the Divine government, he is sinful.

There are many persons who talk to us in this way: I cannot worship in your churches; but let me, on a Sunday morning, go into the fields, in the midst of the scenes of nature, and I think I can see God there. My dear old venerable father used to pooh-pooh that; he used to call it moonshine; and I used to say, "Yes, and sunshine too, father; for I am just one of those persons." I never had, under preaching, anything like such a personal feeling of holiness, or such a sense of the nearness and overpowering presence of the other world brought to me, as through the faculty of ideality, or that principle of the soul which takes cognizance of fine, beautiful things, — the sense of taste.

I know that when I was in the Luxembourg, and saw the first real regiment of paintings that I ever saw in my life, everything retreated to my brain. I did not feel the floor when I walked on it. My head seemed like a globe of fire. I never felt the sanctity of the love and presence of God so near to me, and I never had such an appreciation of the beauty and glory of infinite justice, as I did in the gallery of pictures at the Luxembourg. I might have sat — as I did — in Calvin's chair at Geneva without any emotions of that kind. I appreciate the life of Calvin, his great work, and his excellences; but no associations connected with him could produce such an effect upon me as I received at that time through the sense of taste.

My dear old father never could sympathize with that feeling. He thought that though it might sometimes be excused, it was a wishy-washy sort of piety. And there are many who feel that this sense of exquisite beauty cannot have much to do with religion. And yet, in many natures it is auxiliary to their conscience; and in such cases through it you will reach the moral sense when you cannot in any other way.

A man says, "Such a lady thinks herself so literary and so fine, that she has gone to the Episcopal Church and thinks that she cannot stand our preaching. The fact is, she cannot stand the right up and down truth. She does not like that kind of preaching which opens the door of the heart and shows a man that he is a traitor before God, and is bound to hell and damnation; and so she has gone among the Episcopalians." How much knowledge of the mind of man has a person who makes that criticism?

SINFULNESS TO BE PREACHED TOWARD HOPE.

Through every one of these avenues of which I have spoken the conscience may be approached. Some men are so organized that they have a conscience which can be reached directly; but the majority of men have consciences which can be aroused only through auxiliary powers; and it is your duty to know what these auxiliary powers are, and through them to address men's consciences so as to be sure of gaining access to them. For a man's conscience is like a man in his house, who is very busy, and who instructs his servant to look at every person who comes to the door, and let him in if he looks all right, and not otherwise. Many a man's conscience is not reached because the truth is not properly presented to him. The approach which we make to men's consciences and feelings in religion must be made in such a way as to excite in them, not combativeness, not resistance, but hope and aspiration.

There are times, I suppose, when a congregation which has been under your care for a time may need to be roused up by what I should call extravagant preaching. I remember hearing my father say that when he went to East Hampton he found that the church there had subsided into a state of lethargic content. He could not by a direct appeal to their feelings produce any uplift; and so he resorted to another method. Said he, "I took decrees, I took foreordination, I took election, and I took reprobation, and I let them off all at once; and pretty soon I saw that the people were getting mad. I kept at them till by and by I had the whole church about my ears; and they

had waked up; and then I began to put in the gospel."

Now, whatever may be the adroitness of such a practice as that (I do not undertake to judge in such a matter), the general rule, and the rule which, if you have the formation and training of your church, you will scarcely need to go aside from, is this: that all your expositions of evil and shortcoming should inspire hope in your people, and not despair; that they should work toward reformation, and not merely toward producing in men the feeling that they are miserable sinners, like the Kentucky negro, who had been kicked and cudgeled all his life, and always expected to be kicked and cudgeled.

CHRIST'S WAY.

You know, on the other hand, that there are children who are so sensitive to their parents' wishes that the slightest frown, or shadow of a frown, throws them into tears. They want to do the things which will please their father and mother, and they cannot bear the thought that they have done anything to displease them. And you should give your congregations such a sense of the wrongfulness of wrong, and the sinfulness of sin, that they shall long for the right thing. Do not put your congregation into a mortar, and take a pestle, and grind them to powder. Do not make them feel all the time that they are miserable sinners, and that God may by and by come with a revival, and that there may then be a resurrection in the valley of dry bones, but that they have no power to do anything for themselves. Make them feel, rather, that the Lord

God, who made the earth, is the Father of all its people, and will help them, "working in *them* to will and to do of his good pleasure"; that he is the God before whom they are to give an account, and who has made himself known to them by the death of Jesus Christ; that he has said to the world that the nature of Divine holiness and Divine power was to be such as to recover and restore manhood; that the plenitude of divinity shows itself in this: that it brings forth in men that which reveals to them what is good and what is bad. You cannot preach of man's sinfulness too much, nor in too many ways, provided it develops in your hearers an earnest aspiration and a longing desire for larger knowledge. The effect of a true preaching of sinfulness is to produce in men continual discontent, so that they shall say, "I am not pure in my heart; I am not patient as I ought to be; I am not disinterested enough; I am too proud and too selfish." Where, in preaching, instead of simply making men feel that they have violated the law of the universe, you make them feel that sin is personal to them, and that they are sinful in the moral and social elements of their being, and in the conduct of their life, at the store, in the school, at home, everywhere, and that what is demanded of them is that they shall grow as men in Christ Jesus, I think you will have produced the effect which the Lord Jesus Christ sought in his preaching, and which the Apostles followed in their teaching.

Not that there are not occasions for the preaching of fear; but let me say to you, gentlemen, that the ministration of fear, pure and simple, belongs to men who stand on the edge of animalism. The whip for the

horse; the goad for the ox; and fear for that man who is the next remove higher. But as soon as fear has done its work, which is made necessary merely because men's hides are so tough, then they are prepared to get out of the way of it, and to be plied with something nobler.

Does fear die away, then? No, it transmutes itself. It becomes an undertone. It no longer exists in its own absolute form. It adds itself, as a kind of color, to every other faculty of the mind; so that conscience has its latent fear, hope has its latent fear, and love has its latent fear. It is no longer coarse, selfish, animal-like, but it gives stimulus and edge and inspiration and aspiration to each of the better feelings in the soul.

Do not think, then, that you must not preach fear. Preach it; but, as soon as you can, preach it as belonging to everything which is beautiful, and sweet, and pure, and truthful, and high, and noble.

Whether you preach one view of sin or another, measure your preaching by this: Does it discourage men? Does it drive them off from religion? Does it make them more obstinate and self-willed? Or, does it make men tender? Does it enlarge their sense of infirmity? Does it show them where infirmity breaks over into sin? Does it make them feel that they need the down-shining, everlasting presence of the Divine Spirit? If such is the fruit of your preaching of sin, your church will speedily be filled, and the work of Christ will go on under your ministration to the sanctification of the hearts of your people, as fast as the work of summer goes on when autumn is near at hand, and the sun is in its full blaze.

X.

THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

March 12, 1874.

THIS afternoon I purpose speaking to you on the subject of *Repentance, Conversion, and Sanctification,* — the three stages of Christian life.

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

What is a Christian? It is one who is undertaking to learn how to live as Christ commanded. What is enough to enable one to say, "I am a Christian"? On what ground may you, as pastors and teachers, encourage your people to feel that they are Christians, and to make a public profession of their faith in Christianity? Whoever gives you reasonable evidence that he has set out in good earnest to become a disciple — that is, a *learner* — in the spirit and school of Christ has a right to hope. Almost always the statement in my time has been that a man must have certain interior changes of which he, or somebody, should be conscious, — certain philosophical, interior conditions, which should evince their reality by outward life. My own judgment is that the definitions of becoming a Chris-

tian should be simplified and brought back to where they were in the time of Christ and his Apostles.

THE THREE ELEMENTS.

There are certainly three things which are implied, although they may not be consciously analyzed and distinctly set before the mind of a person who is a beginner in this new style of life, — namely, *renunciation*, *adhesion*, and *construction*. It will not hurt you to have substituted for the names "repentance, faith, and right-living" these less familiar names; for sometimes a new word sets a man a-thinking; whereas, if a word has been used from time immemorial, it is so smooth from handling that it is apt to slip through the mind without producing any impression. Renunciation is a resolute purpose to abandon wrong; a vivid discrimination of some kind between right and wrong, according to the intensity of the man (low if he be low, middle if he be at the middle, and high if he be high), accompanied by a desire to turn from that which is wrong. Adhesion is a distinct sense of followership; the acceptance of Christ, not intellectually, as we accept Sir William Hamilton in one school, or as we accept Comte in another school, or as we accept Herbert Spencer in another school, but as one accepts some ideal master whose personal life is a living representation of what he intends to be; and he who comes into the Christian life accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as the embodiment of that life which he means to live, and as the representation of that character which he means to form in himself; and it is to this Christ that he comes with personal adhesion.

SEED-TIME AND HARVEST.

Now, it is not right for you to make out a full definition of faith, as it exists when it has ripened in men, and come to its climax, and then say that a man is not converted until he has such a perception of Christ as that, and such a form of adhesion by faith to him. For we are not to test the beginnings of life by the phenomena of its maturity. You are not to apply to a new-born babe the tests which you apply to a man, who, by law, has attained his majority. A babe must be judged through faith, by what he *is* to *be*, much more than by what he is.

So when men begin the divine life, although some, under circumstances of which I shall speak, from the beginning give evidence of wonderful transformations, and have a very beautiful experience, yet, taking men collectively, you are to judge of them, not by what they say when they are catechized and taught what to say; but by what you know, looking at them with perceiving eyes and with understanding hearts, to be the actual condition of their inward state of mind. I know that persons who have been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord by Christian parents, whose house has been a church, and whose daily life has been almost that of a catechumen, may be brought into a full disclosure of Christian life, with phenomena which will be ripe and ample; but often these persons were converted from the cradle. They were trained in their will, as well as in their other faculties, into Christian living, so that when the disclosure comes it is like the unveiling of a statue on

a public square. To the great mass it seems to have sprung into being then and there; while, in reality, it has been the work of the chisel and the mallet for months, and, it may be, through years. The disclosure is sudden, but the formation was not.

The seed-form of experience is enough, therefore, on which to encourage a man to say, "I am a beginning-Christian." If men are afraid to say, "I am a Christian," because they cannot stand all the tests of Christianity, let them modify their statement, and say, not, "I am beginning to be a Christian," which might involve some absurdity, but "I am a beginning-Christian. I have begun to be a Christian." How far have you gone? Have you renounced all sin? Woe be to that man who should dare to say "Yes" to that question. No man can tell what he has renounced of unborn things. No man can say, "I have cleansed my heart in innocency," in any modern philosophical sense of that expression. But as I understand it, and according to my conception of sinfulness, he can say, "I have made up my mind to abandon sin."

You will usually find that, to men of low and rude culture, sin is some one or two objective things, and their renunciation of sin will be mostly in regard to those distinct offenses. Higher than these, is a grade of men to whom sin is not only a series of acts, but a principle from which such series of acts have an outflow; in their case there will be a larger and broader renunciation of sin: but this larger and broader one is not to discountenance the smaller and narrower one.

BEGINNING-CHRISTIANS.

A man who has, according to his conception of right and wrong, chosen sides, and said, "By the help of God I am going to do right; I mean to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to judge by his example and commandments of what is right and wrong for me," — such a man, I hold, has begun a Christian life. He is a beginning-Christian. That which is abundant for the seed-time in the spring would be considered very poor for the harvest-time in the autumn; and that which is enough to begin this end of Christian life with would be far from satisfactory at the other end of Christian life. It is a great deal better that a man should begin, as Christ puts it, like a grain of mustard-seed, and go on growing through his life, rising and rising, as one ascends on an inclined plane, than that he should suddenly burst into Christian life with an affluence of experience, and with choral joy, and then go sliding down the other way through the rest of his life.

I am not disinclined to look with favor upon the dramatic experience of which I shall speak in a moment; but we are to be as little children in the Christian life, and the evidences of Christian life may begin with childlike experiences. I regard it as vastly important that this should be recognized in your ministry; because I think that multitudes of men, for lack of a recognition of it, are lost, — that is, that they stay away from the church and from God's people, and live an undisclosed life, or a partially developed Christian life, all the rest of their days; whereas, if they had

been taken by the hand, and it had been said to them: "You are a babe in Christ Jesus, but, being a babe, you have the seminal forms of manhood in Christ Jesus which you must bring forth and unfold, and carry on and up; you are a learner in the school of Christ, you are in the primary class, and you are to rise up through all the lower stages to graduation," — they might have been saved.

INFANCY NEEDS PROTECTION.

You must not mistake my meaning, and suppose that I bring Christian character and worldly character so near together that the point of distinction between them in their ideal forms is very slight.

Nothing can be more different from the natural character (that is, the unfolded nature of man) under the influences of this world, and the nature of man developed under the influences of the Lord Jesus Christ. But I say that the beginning of that transcendent character which we call *Christian* is very small and very feeble, and that you are to accept that beginning in the hope of the disclosure and the ending.

I therefore feel, when men have come to the evidence of being converted, that the throwing them off and making them wait, and refusing to admit them either into the church or into a probationary class, is unwise. Some ministers are in the habit of saying, "If this is the work of God, it will stand, and there is no danger of waiting; and if it is not the work of God, they had better be undeceived"; but I feel that this is not the true way to proceed. It is as if a man should take a new-born babe, and lay it out of doors,

and say, "Now, if this child lives till morning, why, it will be worth our while to take care of it; but if it does not, there is no use of trying to do anything with it." When is it that a child needs succor, if not in the time of its absolute helplessness? And where is it that man needs the most instruction and culture and shelter, if not at that point where the kingdom of God is as a spark of fire, or as a bruised reed. The reed grows tall and slim, and is so tremulous that it can hardly stand up; and some wild animal, having passed by, has bruised it; it still stands weakly, but so tender is the heart of God that, reaching forth, this bruised reed he will not break nor even bend. And he will not quench the smoking flax. That little point of flame, which burns blue and red, and rises and falls, and rises and falls, and seems ready to go out, on the top of the expiring wick, he will not extinguish. He says, "I will move so gently that the feeblest flame shall not be quenched; and thus tenderly and gently will I deal with the souls of men."

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, until he send forth judgment unto victory."

So you are to take the sparks and first beginnings of Christian development, and shelter them, and nourish them, and protect them, until you bring forth judgment unto victory, — until you produce a Christian character which overcomes the world.

THE FIRST STEP.

Now, the theory of the New Testament, — if it have a theory, — at all events the *practice* of the New Testa-

ment, seems to me to have been this: to bring men first, promptly, to a renunciation of every known wrong thing; to the resolution, "I will break off my sins." That was significant everywhere, as the very first step. Having taken that step, men were brought to an immediate beginning of the higher and better life. The philosophy which lies at the root of that life is this: Such is the nature of Christian living that the moment a man begins to interpret it practically, it instructs him in that which he in no other way can learn so well.

First, the great principle of Christian life is disinterested benevolence, — love to God and love to man. Now, undertake to live according to that principle. Let him that stole, steal no more; let him that drank, drink no more; let him that was licentious, be licentious no more; let him that railed, rail no more; and let him that quarreled, quarrel no more. Let all known sins be broken off. Say to yourself, "I will follow Christ"; and begin to follow him. When you are reviled, revile not again. If you do not learn what patience is in trying to fulfill that purpose, I do not know how you can learn it. If that is not a better sermon than any you could hear preached, I am mistaken. Let a man pierce you in the tenderest place with injurious words, when you have it in your power to blast him like lightning, and do you stand still and say nothing; and if that will not teach you patience, then I see not how it can be taught to you. You are, say, in business; now let a man, in a place where your very credit is at stake, and at a time when your whole commercial fabric is in jeopardy, with mildew lips destroy your reputation, and let it be reported to you, and

do you listen to the voice of Christ, that says, "Pray for him, and love him," — and see whether you will not grow in patience. If it were an abstract proposition, in the conference-room, O, yes, you could do it; but when to-morrow you meet the directors of your company, and the first man turns the cold shoulder to you, and then the next man, and then the next, and you see that your detractor has struck you to kill, and you have it in your power to disclose something that shall kill him, and you say, "I have set out to follow Christ; he reviled not again, and I must follow him, and I will follow him, though it kill me," — do you not suppose that that experience will open in you a knowledge of the sinfulness and temptation of the human heart? Though before then you had not known much about sin and the temptations to sin, when you had seen its interpretation under such provocation would you not know something about it? In all his wrestling with the world, let a man say, "I hold myself accountable to my fellow-men for the light of my reason." Let him say, "I hold myself not to have received this shining imagination of mine to make sparks fly for men to look at, but to be employed as an opalescent light for the comfort of others." Let him say, "I am strong, not that I may wrap my cloak about me, and walk my own way, but that I may help weak people to gain a sense of the new life." Let him say, "I am to give myself for men, living, as Christ gave himself for men, living and dying."

Introduce a man into this school of Christ, and let him undertake to obey the Divine commands in his business or calling during the day, and he will come

back at night, and say, "I have failed." He will feel, as all early scholars in that school must, that he has an imperfect lesson. But you encourage him, and say, "Where you failed to-day, you may succeed to-morrow." And to-morrow perhaps he does succeed where he has failed to-day; but sin breaks out somewhere else in his experience. So he goes on, little by little, in his endeavor to lead a Christian life; but he is made to feel, to know, to painfully realize, how little he can do of that which he knows he ought to do, without Divine help; and he appeals for help; and the prayers of such men under such circumstances come up to the throne of grace with an ardor which is irresistible, and God hears them. No man can go through Christ's school in that way without being convinced that he has need in his inward life.

VIVID EXPERIENCES EXCEPTIONAL.

Then, in advocating this mode of looking at men, and introducing them into the Christian course, the question would naturally come up, "Do you set aside all dramatic experiences?" No, I do not, at all! So far from it, I look at them with admiration. I do not wonder that people covet them. I strove after them long enough, but I never got them. And at last I learned to say, "If it please God, in the exercise of Divine sovereignty, to bring a man into a Christian life in a way conformable to his foregoing history, to his temperament, and to the laws that regulate him, who am I that I should call God's orthodoxy in question? Has he not a right to call men in any way that suits him?" And if a man is of such a nature, if he has

sensibility such that he has been carried through devious paths, and is brought at last into such contingencies that all at once there is, by reason of the instruction which he has received, and by reason of the peculiarity of his organization, an intense conception, an inlooking sense by which is revealed to him, not simply the sinfulness of his actions, but the sinfulness of his nature; if he is made to feel the amplitude of sin in him; if he wrestles with the consciousness that God is not in all his thoughts, that his soul hates God, and that he will not have God to reign over him; and if, in that mighty wrestling, more wonderful in the darkness of his soul than Jacob's wrestling in the darkness of the night with the angel of God, he is at last conscious that there is some bright, shooting, electric flash visible before him which gives him a sudden sense of the beauty of God in Christ, of the majesty of the Divine government, and of the grandeur of the Christian life; and if there springs up in him an impulse to rejoice and glorify God, — do you ask me if I believe that his experience has no validity? It is admirable! It is beautiful!

But this I say (as I shall show more at length at the end of the lecture, if I ever get to it), that you are not to judge all experiences by special ones. You might as well say, having read one of Milton's outbursts of the highest kind, "Now, I will not call anything in literature good unless it is as fine as that," as to say that you will not recognize anything as conversion which does not go as high as those experiences of which I have been speaking. I say that these are exceptional cases; and they are genuine, as poets are genuine; but

everybody is not a poet. They are genuine, as inventors are genuine; but everybody is not an inventor. You are not to judge of the whole in this matter by single instances.

THE POINT OF CHANGE.

You will, then, perhaps ask me, "Is not this the doctrine of 'gradualism'? Do not you believe in preaching 'immediatism'?" With all my heart I do. I believe in immediate decisions, I believe in immediate beginnings; but immediatism is simply a checking or stoppage from going in one direction, and beginning to go in another.

Did you ever see a vessel on the East River beating against the wind, and turning when it was about halfway across? The helm is put down, and the sails begin to shiver, and soon they become loose, so that they catch no wind; and the craft is going on and going round, little by little, until, by and by, first the jib takes the wind; the craft still goes on and round, until finally the mainsail takes the wind; and then, with every sail full and drawing, off goes the vessel on the other tack. And unquestionably there was a definite point of time when she stopped going in one direction and commenced going in the other. You might not be able to mark it; but you know that, philosophically, it must be so.

Where a man is going toward wrong heartily, and he is converted, there must be a time when he stops, and means to stop; for nobody ever changes his course from wrong to right by accident. There must be a time when he moves, or attempts to move, in the other

direction, no matter whether he can tell what that time is or not, and no matter whether there was any great convulsion in his experience or not. There is, in the case of every man who reforms his life, a point of time at which he ceases to go in one direction and begins to go in the other direction. There is the principle of immediatism involved in every man's conversion; and those who are walking in the ways of sin should be abundantly plied to stop at once, and at once to begin to walk in the other direction, as the first step toward entering upon a better life, — and for this reason: that what are called "resolutions" are not choices; they are simply step-stones to choices. That is a *resolution* where a man accepts an end without any reference to how it shall be accomplished. That is a *choice* where a man accepts an end, and employs all the instruments within his reach for the accomplishment of it. One is without instrumentality, and the other is with instrumentality. Therefore resolutions wither, while choices hold steadfastly. And you are, by all the means in your power, to bring men, not merely to vague resolutions, not merely to wistfulness, not merely to wish that they were Christians. I suppose there never was a man in the world, brought up with ordinary morality, that did not wish that he was a Christian. There never was a beggar in the world, probably, that did not wish that he was rich enough to make it needless for him to beg. There never was a lazy man who did not wish that he was industrious. There never was a drunkard who did not wish that he was temperate. There never was a man who had lost his reputation that did not wish that he was reputable.

There never was a man of any sort who did not wish for something better. But wishing is invalid. Choosing is the thing.

URGENCY FOR DECISION.

Now, when you see men set in upon from every side; when you see how everything is working on them continually; when you see how strong are the tendencies of business; when you see what rivalries there are in the spheres of ingenuity and industry; when you see what vast pressures are brought to bear on men by the love of wife and children, and by their companionships, congenial and otherwise; when you see how the great round globe is filled with all manner of the most stimulating forces, which are molding and shaping the lives of men; when you see that while, on one day of the week, their attention is called to higher themes and they form purposes of right living, the other six days, like six squadrons, come down upon them and sweep all those purposes away, — under such circumstances, it is necessary that you, as ministers of Christ, charged with the care of men's souls, should concentrate every influence possible to bring them to an immediate decision.

But it should be borne in mind that an immediate decision to do right is not an immediate formation of a right character. The preparations for a decision, and the consequences of choice, may be to any extent gradual; but the choice itself, the subscribing of one's name on the roll of Christ, the writing of it where it shall not be effaced in this world, — this should and will be instantaneous.

EARNEST PREACHING.

I know that persons often think there is a want of dignity in this commanding men to repent; that there is in it a lack of respect for persons' individuality; that it would be better if you should bring your sermon as a bundle of thoughts, and lay it down at men's feet, and leave them to exercise their own free agency as to whether they shall accept your teaching or not. It is thought to be scarcely dignified and philosophical to spread out the cool and calm considerations of duty before a congregation.

To act upon the course which is implied by these objections would be exactly as though a general, dead in earnest, should send a wheelbarrowful of rifle-balls across his line to the enemy, and say, "We do not intend to fire at you; please kill yourselves with these balls!"

For what is a preacher ordained? Christ says: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." I think I see one of these *dilettante* men, one of these modern eunuchs of sermons, who sits and walks before his congregation in such a way as not to disturb their equanimity, or to force upon them any considerations which are not agreeable to them. I can imagine one of them going forth, and sitting down on the bank of the stream where trout are to be found, and saying to them, "O trout! here am I, and here is my basket; please come forth, in the exercise of your trout nature, and get into it"; and I can imagine him to go back home again, and say, "Pleasant was the meadow, and pearly was the stream, but the fish were proud, and signified their in-

tention not to come forth; and I respect their individuality." For my part, I do not believe in the manliness of any such mode of preaching the gospel. It comes from the effeminate philosophy of an effete manhood. I believe in downright power; and if God gave it to you, exercise it. I believe that I have as much right to bombard your hearts as ever Grant had to bombard Petersburg, by the artillery which I can bring to bear upon them through the reason, through the moral sense, through the æsthetic or the beautiful, through taste, through any faculty which belongs to human nature. It is fair play. My purpose is as noble as that which any man can have. No historic hero has such a purpose as every Christian minister has; for when empires fall and thrones crumble, souls will live. When all literature is gone, when the memorials of Westminster are forgotten, when everything in this world is swept into oblivion, God will live to rescue man from destruction, and bring him home to eternal glory. If a man's whole thought is of the cold pages of Cambridge-printed books, that is one thing; but if his thought is of heaven, immortality, and God revealed in Christ, then I tell you he had better be in earnest, or he had better be out of the pulpit.

GRADUAL CONCESSION.

But it will be asked, "Is there no place for gradualism, then?" Yes, there is a place for gradualism, if you choose to call it so. There is that which will have the effect, at any rate, of gradualism. I mean simply this: that I believe, very thoroughly, in such an early conversion, or such an early turning to God, that you

can hardly call it the action of the will, though it is that. When the outer umbilical cord is cut, the inner one is not cut; and after the child is born, it feeds from the mother's soul through years and years, as before it was born it fed from her veins. A child that is of a devout and loving nature, brought up at the knee of a devout and loving mother, is early inclined to God; and it is so trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that it never knows, and never ought to know, the time when it did not sweetly think of God, and attempt to conform itself to the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you can begin with a child, and train it in right ways while its experiences are yet nascent, while it wills through the mother's will, and thinks through the mother's thought, by and by it comes to a point where it cannot distinguish between what is itself and what is her influence. If you can bring up a child in that way, it grows year by year, step by step, and becomes a Christian, though no one can tell precisely when the regenerating change took place.

I have seen persons of the most beautiful life, of a transparent disposition, Christ-like, devout, and having every attribute of true Christian character, come before the Examining Committee of my church. I had on that committee good, most excellent men; but they had been trained in the old-fashioned way of questioning candidates for church membership. I recollect a man (he is in heaven now, and I have no doubt that he has laughed at himself before this) who invariably put this inquiry, "Do you remember the time when you felt hatred toward God?" I have seen persons start up, and say, in reply to that question, "Why, no, sir!" They were

scared. They remember the time when they felt hatred toward God! But this man never could be made to think that genuine work had been wrought in persons who had not gone through that peculiar experience.

I can conceive that a man who has grown unrestrained, and developed self-will in a feeling of independence, has thrown off the claims of God, resisting them with strong passions and animal forces, — I can conceive how such a man, when at last those claims were brought home to him, and the terrible consequences of his course were revealed to him, so that a great struggle was produced in him, he neither being able to let religion go nor to submit to its requirements, — I can conceive how he might have developed in him, not only a conscious resistance to God's will, but defiance of God. But how one who has been brought up at his mother's knee; whose earliest years were years of love to Christ Jesus; whose every thought has been addressed to the subject of right and wrong, and who has constantly endeavored to avoid the wrong and to do the right; who has invariably asked himself what Christ would think; who has been reared from childhood in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, — how such a saint could be supposed to remember having ever felt hatred toward God I cannot understand; and to put such a question to such a one is a desecration of the temple of the Holy Ghost.

So that it is as easy for persons to be converted and not know it, as it is for you to pass from one kingdom to another in the night, and not know it. There is a heavy snow-storm in winter, and the fences are all obliterated, and there are no visible boundaries be-

tween farm and farm, and a man starts out and goes to the house of a neighbor; he does not know when he passes that point which separates between his ground and that neighbor's.

THE USE OF FEELING.

But you say, "Do you suppose that a person can go into the Christian life as easy as that? Must there not be feeling?" Well, certainly; but I beg you to understand that the function of right feeling in life is to incite persons to right courses. In and of itself it has no value, unless it be to produce happiness in men, or right conduct leading to happiness.

How much feeling, then, must a man have? Just as much as is necessary. How much steam must a little yacht have? Just as much as will turn the machinery and propel the hull. But the steam required by that yacht would not be a thimbleful for an ocean steamer of five thousand tons. How much must that steamer have? Enough to turn its ponderous machinery. How much feeling must a man have? Enough to turn him from wrong to right. All beyond what is required for that is surplusage.

I build a mill on the river Bantam, where I caught my first fish; and all the year round that river supplies the motive-power which is necessary to propel the wheel of that mill, and it turns and grinds continually; but suppose I should build my mill on the river Amazon, would I be any better off? No; for I have all the water that the mill wants in the Bantam; and all that the Amazon had more than that would be waste, and would not do the least particle of good.

All that feeling is good for is to produce motion. It is motive-power. It is impulse. But persons have an impression that it has a certain kind of cleansing power, so that if a man is aroused to a sense of his sinfulness, and is steeped in it, there is some sort of an effect like that which is produced when yarn is put into the dye-vat, where it must be allowed to soak, and soak, in order to have the colors strike through. Men seem to think that conviction is a vat, and that the sinner must soak in it for an indefinite period, in order to be thoroughly converted.

But this is a mistake. I will give an instance which will illustrate what I mean.

A strong man in Ohio, a lawyer of repute and an infidel, went to the nearest county seat on court business. While there, he went to spend an evening with an old friend, a farmer, and a member of the church. When the hour for retiring came, the farmer thought in himself, "This man is one of the greatest geniuses in the State; and I know his opinions; how can I read and pray in his presence?" But he felt it to be his duty; so, with fear and trembling, he took down his Bible, and said to the man, "It is our time for evening worship, will you join with us?" Now, this man, although he was an unbeliever, was a gentleman, and he expressed himself pleased to unite with the family in their religious exercises. The farmer read, with a tremulous voice, a chapter; and then knelt down, half scared, and prayed, not knowing whether he was praying to God, or whether he was praying away from the lawyer. He got through the service, however, although it cost him a severe effort; but the effect on the lawyer

was powerful. He said to himself, "I know this man, and he knows me; and he never would have done this if he had not had a conviction that it was his duty. He had no purpose to gain; he sacrificed his feelings by doing it. There must be something in religion to enable a man to do such a thing." And the more he thought of it, the more his spiritual sense was opened; and as there was a revival being held in the place, he went to one of the conference-meetings; and at the close he stood up and declared that God had illuminated his mind, and that he was resolved from that time forth to live a Christian life. He had not gone through any tremendous wrestling or feeling; he was conscious of on great swelling gulf-stream that was sweeping him to damnation; he had no such experience as persons who have purposely lived wicked lives often have; but do you not think that he had feeling enough?

Let me put it in another way. Many men mourn that they have not had a fearful experience. They think they are shallow Christians because they have never had such a sense of sinfulness as they hear other people talk of.

Here are my two boys. Both of them have been quarreling, and they have both in their quarrel done great injustice to some neighbor's children. I bring in the older one, and he denies it. I convict him, after a great deal of wrangling. He stands out against my persuasion. He will not confess his fault. Finally, after much threatening and whipping, I subdue him, and bring him to a confession and to a promise.

The other boy comes in, and I say, "My son, such

and such things are said in respect to you." He begins to blush the moment I commence to speak; and as soon as he hears me through, or before I am done with my statement, the tears roll down his cheeks, and he says, "Father, it is true, and I am ashamed of myself. I did what I am accused of, and I am thoroughly sorry for it." And that is the last of it.

Now, I want to know which of these two brothers has had the best time, which has acted the most honorably, which is the most manly, and which gives token of the greatest moral health? And yet there are many persons who think that there is a great advantage in being put into a caldron of conviction, and bubbling and boiling and stewing there, and that they are good Christians in proportion as they are mean, and refuse to submit to magnanimity and honor and manhood.

The moment right and wrong are made clear to a man, the moment he sees the celestial life standing over against the animal life, quick as a flash his thought should go from the wrong to the right. The quicker you can go out of a wrong course into a right one, and the less of punitive experience you require to lead you to make the change, the better. It is all wrong, this notion that a man must wait a great while for feeling, or for more feeling, before he sets out in the Christian life.

Say to men, "Spread sail; and if there is wind of feeling enough to take you out of the channel into the ocean, avail yourself of it. No matter how slight the wind may be, make sail; and so long as you have enough to carry your vessel, you would not be any better off if there was a gale."

EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION.

And now, as to the evidence which men will develop, and which you are to search for: In the beginning of a man's career in the Christian life, when he first commences to form purposes of reformation, you are to see what knowledge he has in that direction; and it will develop itself in all sorts of ways. You must remember the infirmities of men. For example, one man comes to me, and I ask him what about the Christian scheme, and about the history of Christ, and find that he knows comparatively little about these things. I find that he is determined to be a Christian and wants to join the church. I say to him, "Joining the church is not religion." "I know that," he says; "but I am going to join the church and be a better man." He knows very little about repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; but he has a vague feeling that the church represents the whole Christian life. He is fumbling about and feeling his way in the dark; he is blind; he needs light; and my business is to look on him, as God does, with great tenderness, and lead him along. He has a purpose, and it only needs that he shall have intelligence; and my business is to administer it to him, as he can bear it, little by little. This being done, he will be saved.

It is often asked of a person that is being examined, "How long do you think it has been since you became a Christian?" "About two months." "Do you recollect the particular time when you became a Christian?" "Well, I think it was on such a day." "Do you remember the circumstances under which you were converted?"

"I think it was under such and such circumstances." "Did you have any very deep experiences?" "I cannot say that I did. I felt that I was a sinner, and that I was in need of forgiveness; and I resolved to live a Christian life." "Have you had any great joy since?" "Not as much as I wish I had." "Do you love to read your Bible?" "Sometimes I do." "Sometimes? Do not you like to read it *always?*" "I do not know that I do."

Then the examining committee set to work to make the man insincere. That was a good honest answer. I like those persons who answer against themselves honestly. But the committee are not satisfied. They think it necessary to "search that thing out," as they say; and they put the question again. "Do not you always love to read the word of God?" There is not a man who asks the question that does. You might as well ask me, "Are not you always hungry?" Then they say, "Do you love to pray?" "Yes, sir." "Do you love to be where God's people are?" That is the toughest question of all!

If a poor ignorant man told me that he was a Christian, and wanted to go into the church, I would say, "That is evidence to me." On the other hand, if an intelligent person said that he liked to read the Bible, that he liked to pray, that he liked to be in the church, and so on, I should not consider that as evidence. I should give weight to the testimony of each according to the place which he occupied, and the circumstances by which he was surrounded. In order to judge of a man's piety and of his fitness to go into the church, I want to know his disposition. I want to know whether

he has reconciled himself in regard to that ten years' quarrel with his neighbor. I want to know if he has gone and confessed to that man to whom he told a lie. I want to know whether he has returned with interest the five thousand dollars which he embezzled when he settled that estate, and whether he has made confession to the parties concerned.

I have had to distribute much money which had been unjustly obtained or withheld. Persons on coming into my church have said that they had defrauded men with whom they had had dealings, and have delegated me to carry the money of which they were unjustly possessed to the rightful owners.

I recollect a man who came to me and said, "I was in a certain firm, and we did a commission business; and there were three or four occasions on which I know we received a good deal of money which belonged to our customers. I cannot tell you who my partners were, because it is not for me to inculpate them; but I want you to take so much money (giving me the amount) and pay it out so and so. I have made up my mind to be a Christian; I feel that a Christian must be honest; and I want you to see such and such men and give them this money without any name." It was a very interesting interview that I had with one of the men, because the effect was to break him down and bring him under conviction. It was a gospel to him. I went into his counting-house, and said, "I have a very pleasant duty to perform. There is a man uniting with my church who thinks he is a Christian, who is trying to live a Christian life, and who says he has defrauded you. This is the amount of the principal, and this is the interest."

The man sat and trembled a moment, and then he said, "Who is he? For God's sake, tell me his name." "No, sir," I said, "I cannot tell you his name." The man cried like a child. "Well,': said he, "that means something. -- Partner, come here." The partner came, and he had to tell it all over to him. This man himself came to my church and began to believe in religion. This instance was so different from anything that he had met with before, that he thought, after all, there must be something in Christianity, although no such impression had been made upon him before that time. For, where men do business and find that deacons cheat them, that leading men in the church cheat them, and that they have to look out as sharp for members of the church as for anybody else (and a little sharper, because, having everything settled up above, they think they can take a little more liberty down here), then it is hard to preach the gospel to them effectively; but when you bring evidence to worldly business men that there is among Christians self-denial, self-sacrifice, and humiliation, not only before God but before men, it is like a gospel to them.

DISPOSITION THE CRITERION.

In judging of a man's character as a Christian, therefore, I inquire, first, "Is your purpose right?" and secondly, "Is your disposition conformable to that purpose?" I hardly ever put the same questions to one man that I do to another.

Every man, therefore, who is typical of a class must be treated according to his disposition. Some men are cold; and if they are Christ's, they will begin

to thaw out, and be genial. Some men are very selfish, proper, and exceedingly excellent; and if they really become Christians, you will see the steams and mists rising which indicate the action of April on the frozen ground. There are some men who are proud and arrogant; and if they have Christ's spirit in them, they will begin to be condescending and gentle.

Now, I do not look for the ground to thaw four feet deep in a second. If it thaws an inch deep in a day, I say, "Very well, let it go on, and keep going on, under the warmth of the sun." And if a man's purpose is right, and he is, in his daily life, fulfilling that purpose, and finding out his duty more and more, I am content, and I say of him, "He is converted."

So much for Repentance, and so much for the doctrine of Conversion.

AFTER-DEVELOPMENT.

There is one more point that I wish to propound (unless that bell means that you must go. You can stay, can you? Very well. You will have me here only twice after to-day, and perhaps you can afford to bear a little more weariness in these last lectures). I want to say, in regard to the after-development of Christian life, that we are too apt, as soon as men are converted, and brought into the fold, to feel, "Now they are all safe, and we will look out for others." We are forever dragging the net, and never scaling and packing down our fish. We are working to save men's souls on the theory that when a man has a very slight moral impression made on him, and he swells the number of our church, we are to take it for granted that his soul

is saved. I do not feel so at all. I feel that we are more responsible for a person when once we have him in the church than we were before. And frequently he is in more danger; because if he is wrong, and he thinks he is right, all those influences which otherwise would naturally tend to condemn him cease to operate on him. Such a man is in great danger in the church; and your work must especially continue with him.

And in regard to the higher life in a church, let me say, that by maintaining the whole membership active, and keeping fresh before their minds that they are following Christ, not in their corporate church capacity, but each one in the field where Christ put him, their development in that higher life will be promoted. A boy is following Christ as a boy, at home, at school, wherever he is, and therefore his experiences and developments must be there, and not somewhere else. A mother who cannot go to meeting, but is at home bearing and nursing children, has her church in that particular workshop. In those special ways in which her duties are to be performed, she is to develop this higher life of consecration to God, through benevolence, and faith, and love, and hope. A mechanic or day-laborer finds his altar in precisely those relations in which, in the providence of God, he is placed. The business man has his temptations and victories, and in those temptations and victories, for the most part, his higher disposition is to be unfolded. We are to make men feel that while the church is the great feeding-ground of the world, the world of business is the drilling-ground where the strength of those who are in the church is to be used. We are to make them feel that

that love is poor and superficial which does not actuate their every-day life; that being a Christian is carrying one's self lovingly in the place where God put his ordinary life, and performing the duties of the higher life with a full beneficence and consecration; that, to be a true worshiper of God, one must carry the spirit of the Sabbath into all the week, and not act as if Sunday were the sacred day, and all the rest of the days unsacred. We are to make them feel that they are to take their religion to their business, and that the sphere of their business is the place where their religion should develop itself.

THE HIGHER LIFE.

Then comes the transcendent experience of Christians. I have spoken somewhat slightingly in your presence, I am afraid, of perfectionism. I have known instances in which I did not sufficiently measure my words; and it may be that I have used language which might be construed as throwing contempt upon perfectionists. But far be it from me to speak with contempt, I would rather speak with admiration, of what may more fitly be called the higher forms of the development of Christian experience. There is, I believe, as much a genius for the higher developments of Christianity — that is, for the higher natural developments of the human mind — as there is for developments of any other kind. Some of the higher Christian developments in men are of transcendent beauty, and are not to be cried down, unless those who possess them make them cruel and despotic; but they are not possible to all.

For example, no man who is misadjusted in his original structure, no man the problem of whose life consists in harmonizing his own antagonistic faculties, will be able to develop the quality of serenity in life except to a limited degree; while on the other hand a man whose original structure is well adjusted, and whose faculties are naturally harmonious, will be able to develop that quality to a high degree of perfection.

I once had come to my lecture-room a lady whose business was to preach the higher life; and I think I never saw so sweet and seraphic a face as that of this woman. She stood in the presence of my congregation and talked; and it was like a vision of angels to hear her voice. It did me good all through to witness her serene, simple rejoicing in Jesus Christ, and to observe the intense conviction which she had, that as she was, so everybody could be. She was mistaken in this; but it was a mistake which came from the simplicity and generosity of her heart; and she, under the full power of faith and love in Jesus Christ, rose to an experience as unique as Mozart's musical talent, that was real, but not universal. It was special to her by reason of a foregoing preparation for it in her nature, organization, endowment, and communion with God.

I should rejoice to see a church made up of such persons; but am I to say to my beloved people, "Here is what you must all come to. You can every one of you come to this, and it is your fault and sin if you do not come to it"? I might as well read one of Shakespeare's dramas in a village school, and say to the boys, "Not one of you may think that he is educated until he can write such a drama as that." But how many

men in the history of the world could do that? I might as well examine a boy in Newton's *Principia*, and say, "There is what you are to come to, and you will be sinful if you do not come to it."

These things are not general, but special. Yet it is a great comfort to me, in my struggles with myself, in my attempt to chord my own varying powers, to know that such struggles have resulted in harmony in others. I know that it is real, and I have hope. There was never anything that so nearly killed me as trying to be Jonathan Edwards. I did try hard. Then I tried to be Brainard; then I tried to be James Brainard Taylor; then I tried to be Payson; then I tried to be Henry Martyn; and then I gave up, and succeeded in being nothing but just myself.

Yet every man must feel that he can raise himself higher and higher. Do not allow people to feel that there are no higher attainments than they have reached. Do not allow them to feel that there is no higher rest of soul into which they can ascend.

If any rise to a high degree of perfection, let it be maintained, and maintained, too, with humility, for I have seen persons that claimed to have perfection who were puffed up, and about whom, in their social ways, there was an ineffable odor of, "Don't you wish you were as good as I am?" See that the higher life does not degenerate into anything unworthy; and see, also, that it does not discourage anybody; and that you do not teach your people that their feeling must be just so or it is good for nothing.

All feelings that aim in the right direction are recognized and blessed of God, from the lowest to the

highest. The same sun that moves round and round the world, and shines on the cedars of Lebanon, on the mighty live-oaks of Florida, and on the immense sequoias of California, also shines on the moss and the lichen; and the love of God broods over all men, from the lowest to the highest.

XI.

CHRISTIAN MANHOOD.

March 18, 1874.

THE AIM OF PAUL'S MINISTRY.

I CANNOT trace in the Apostle Paul's writings the slightest effect of his visit among the Greeks. He does not seem to have seen, or if he saw he does not seem to have felt, or if he felt he felt only glancingly and superficially, the physical and visible beauty which was developed among the Greek people. Whether it was because the stock to which he belonged had no education in the science of beauty (the Jews were not a building people, nor a painting people, nor, in general, a structural people), or whether it was because all their sense of beauty was drawn up into their moral nature, so that what was beauty to them was beauty of character, as it is called, or beauty of holiness, as it is expressed in the Scriptures, cannot be precisely said, although the latter is the view I rather incline to; but, with the exception of some general allusions, there is very little evidence that the Apostle took much from the Greeks. He spoke of their games, of their races, of their strifes, and so on; but there is one figure that

he employs which I shall use by way of introducing this lecture, and which is found in the third chapter of his first letter to the Corinthian church. He speaks of the disciples as being God's building; and he speaks of himself as being the *architect* who had helped build it, — as the master-builder; he declares that he had sketched out the foundation-plan, and that whoever came after him must build according to that plan, which consisted in delineating the qualities of the Lord Jesus Christ. *He* was that foundation-plan or ground-sketch on which men were to build. And what were they to build? A church? No, each individual man was to build a character.

Paul, then, had a definite conception, himself, of what he was about; and he left also to those who should come after him, under his influence, this suggestion: that they were not to work at haphazard. Their business was to create new men on this foundation or ground-plan of Jesus Christ, which he had sketched out. He had an aim.

Every man that goes into the ministry should have an aim, understanding with himself definitely and accurately, as far as may be, what he shall drive at. It is not simply that you shall perform your routine duties abstractly or ecclesiastically: you will do that of course, but it is only a means to an end; or, if it be not, it is machinery, and unworthy of your manhood. It is not enough that you should get together large congregations in destitute places, or that in places where congregations are organized you should perform the regular parochial duties; for these things, too, are merely instrumental. They are measures adopted

with reference to results. There must be something a great deal deeper.

THE PERFECTION OF HUMAN CHARACTER.

On what plan, then, must a man proceed in his ministry?

This brings me back to the last topic which we had under consideration, and which I had not time to discuss except in a very brief and superficial manner. In my last talk with you, I was on the question of Sanctification, or the final form of the Christian character which it is your object to produce, and toward which all your ministry must lead up. Let me say that I look upon this subject as transcending in importance any other which I have brought before you. It is that which God meant when he revealed himself in Christ Jesus. It is that which he has meant in the long course of that providence by which he has sought to shape this inchoate race into symmetry and beauty and divinity. It is, therefore, the object of the Divine scheme; and you, as workers together with God, will find the supreme end of your ministry in this: the perfection of human character according to the design of God, and according to the pattern of that design which is manifested to us in the life and character of the Lord Jesus Christ. I regard this subject as all-important, not simply on account of the life of the individual who is concerned in it, — though that is immeasurably important, — but because I feel that religion in our age is in danger, on the one hand, of becoming a mere enthusiasm, — haply a superstition; and, on the other hand, of becoming a cold and polite natural-

ism; and because, escaping either of these, it threatens to be theoretic, technic, ecclesiastic, pedantic, — in short, Pharisaic.

So, then, there is, and there must be, a conception of Christian character which shall go deeper; and with that Christian character before us, it seems to me we shall not only renew the power of the ministry, but meet all those tendencies which exist and are gathering their forces to produce *un*religion, if not *ir*religion.

You must needs make the Christian man something more real and noble than the outside world have been accustomed to regard him, and with the power of love, with the force that lies in being, with the irresistibleness that exists in moral qualities, I would gain victories, and reassert the place of the church and foremost the office of the Christian ministry.

THE TRUE NATURE OF MAN.

For just now we are shaking in the wind; and the official Archbishop of Canterbury is not, on the whole, to-day regarded by thinking men in England as so noble a type of manhood as Mr. Tyndall or Herbert Spencer. There is a popular feeling setting in, more and more, that we are to look for our best types of character, not in the church and her offices, but in the schools of science and of philosophy; and though this may not be a new thing, it is a thing whose force is more visible to-day, and whose influence shadows us more, than at any other period of our lives. Men are going back from religion, as something artificial, to nature, as a truer and a safer ground.

Now, what is *Nature?* We use this word carelessly, as signifying the great material world outside of ourselves. When it is applied to man we often signify by it simply his primitive condition. When used in regard to the individual, it signifies that which he is at his birth, — his untaught, untrained self, — his primary status in this world before he has developed anything.

Now, I protest against this use of the word *nature.* Man is not by nature what he is when he begins. In the whole realm of the world outside, that lives in the vegetable kingdom and in the animal kingdom, we do not reason so. We do not consider that to be the nature of a plant which you find when it sprouts. We wait until every seed has brought forth the fullness of what is in it, and that we call its "nature." We look not in the acorn to know the nature of the oak, but in the tree a hundred years grown. We look not in the wild rice of the wilderness to see what the nature of the grain is, but in rice that has been cultivated and perfected. For the nature of cereals we look not at them, small and shriveled where no hand hath reared them; but we look at them where by the skill of man they have been enabled to develop themselves to the uttermost bounds and limits. We do not look at the lion's whelp, blind and sucking its dam, and call that a lion. We wait until it is clothed with power, — then we see the lion and the lion's nature. We do not look at the poor unfledged and callow eaglet, opening its mouth and receiving food from the parent bird, and call that an eagle. It is only when he lifts himself up with power of wing and reach of vision that we call

him the king of birds. His nature is not at its puling beginnings, but the other end.

And why should we take the human race at their seed-end, and call that a man's nature which he is at the outset, when he is raw and undeveloped, instead of calling that his nature which he is when he is ripened and unfolded, and which the mind of God had in view when he created him?

So, then, man's nature does not lie where he began, but the other way. It is that which he may become. Man's true nature is that which he is when, under right conditions, under proper culture, and under the stimulating influence of the Divine Soul, he has been carried on in development, in harmonization, to perfectness. What a man reaches when he is harmonized with himself and with God, — that is his nature.

OBJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

I have made these remarks in order to say that religion is natural to man, not artificial; and that our business is to bring men up to their nature. To every scientist, to every philosopher, to every cold, reasoning man who looks at the instruments of the church, at its economy, at its external clothing, as it were, and calls these religion, I say that what *I* mean by religion is that which a man is brought to by Divine guidance, when everything in him is in its normal condition and ultimate strength. And it is to this that you are to bring men. Bringing them to this is the real object of our ministry. We are not to start them, to disquiet them, to get them into the church, and then to neglect them. We are not simply to make them happy, or to make

them do some good: we are to labor to bring them to the stature of the fullness of manhood in Christ Jesus. That is the supreme end of the Christian ministry.

HUMAN NEED OF EDUCATION.

When animals are born, there are but three letters to the alphabet of their faculties, as it were, — A, B, C; but when men are born there are twenty-six or more letters to the alphabet of their faculties. Take a lion, for instance. There can be only six permutations of his three letters; and the lion soon goes through them all, and grows up to his full self, — and he does it without a schoolmaster. But no man grows up to his full self without a schoolmaster. The ages have to wait for men. The beginnings of the human race are unsusceptible to the full development of human character. That is a thing so large and so glorious that it takes not simply the limit of one man's life, but ages of nations to develop it; and it goes on becoming larger and larger in every generation. The world will come to its full power and supreme glory only when the ultimate conditions of human character are reached, which are so complex because man is so rich in his endowments; because there are so many organ-stops in him; because there are so many alphabetic initials, making as many variations in his experience as the letters of our language make words in literature. It is a large and a long work, to bring to perfection that which God meant in man, and which ought to be expressed by the word *nature*. When a man is developed up to his true nature, the reason, every part of it, must be brought to

its full; the moral sentiments, each one of them, must be brought to their full; the social faculties must be brought to their full; every part of the mind must be brought to its full: and each must learn its *rôle*. Consider how many faculties there are which go to constitute the reason; and consider that each one not only has to learn its own trade, but has to keep good neighborhood with corresponding faculties. Consider how many sentiments there are in a man's moral nature; and consider that each one of these not only has to learn to perform the functions of its own sphere with full power, but that it also has to co-operate with the others. Consider that every part is to grow strong, and is also to grow concordantly with the rest.

There is this necessity of education, or development by training, in each man's natural state, — not the state in which he is born, but that state *for* which he was born, and towards which he is to come by the gradual birth of fourscore years or more; and your business, as an educator, is to bring him to that.

LOVE, THE ONLY PRACTICAL SOUL-CENTER.

This view gives an immense leverage. I speak not altogether without experience. I have a congregation which is filled with young scientists. I know their doubts. I am acquainted with their difficulties. I have for years been seeking to find out the way of presenting to them the truth as it is in Christ. I have been endeavoring to preach the gospel to men who have been imbued with the spirit of the modern schools, in such a way that it should meet their moral convictions. I have studied to impress men with the feeling

that religion means that final form of development which consists in the perfect harmonization and strengthening of their powers around about a common center of the soul, under the Divine inspiration. I have sought to lead them to recognize that religion presents a philosophical conception which is not in disagreement with the tendencies of the present day, — which harmonizes with them. It has been my endeavor thus to gain the ear of men who were likely to be alienated from mere sectarian views which embrace philosophical formulas that are antiquated or run out.

This harmonization of all the faculties of the soul can only take place around the true center. There is but one center about which you can harmonize a man's faculties so that the reason will submit to its mastership; so that the moral sentiments will do obeisance to it; so that the social elements will admit that it is sovereign; so that all the appetites and passions will yield allegiance to it; so that every bodily force will willingly submit to its control: and that center is Love.

OTHER FACULTIES TESTED.

For instance, take Reason as a center and attempt to harmonize the whole character about that. In the first place, the reason of man is but, comparatively speaking, a guide. Make it free as you please, and let it be fruitful as may be, searching every whither; but alone it can never become a center around which the powers of a man will all move obediently and harmoniously. And that experience has shown, thousands and tens of

thousands of times. More than that, reason can never interpret to a man that which is his truest manhood. Reason is itself the instrument of all the rest of the mind; and the man lies under it, behind it, and around it. Just as the ocean lies underneath the ship, so the great motive-power of man, his heart and soul, lies underneath the reason. Reason never can express a feeling. It expresses ideas and their relationships; but the interpretation of emotion by ideas, the intellectual conception of a feeling, is simply impossible. Still less can the force of feeling be controlled by ideas. If a man undertakes to make himself a Christian by standing on a center of reasonableness, and doing whatever he sees to be right, he must ask leave of his temper. There are thousands of men who know that it is reasonable not to be excited; but if, as they step out of doors, they meet a man who owes them money, and who says to them, "Get it if you can; you can't collect a cent," how they fly off from the beautiful center of reason!

It has no control over passion and appetite. You may throw as many icicles into the fire as you please, but icicles won't put out fire. Ice must be liquefied before it can be of any use for such a purpose. And so reason is incapable of extinguishing the elements of evil which exist in men. It may set about controlling the other faculties of the mind; but the moment its attention is withdrawn from them they are like school-boys that laugh and play when the master is out; and when it comes back it is quite surprised at the disorder which prevails in the school of the soul. They won't mind it.

A man loves money better than anything else in the world; he sees how his life is deranged by his avarice, and he tries to persuade himself that it is right to devote himself to its accumulation. He says, "I take a great deal of enjoyment in collecting my rents, and, right or wrong, I am going to have money." The reason protests against this; but avarice laughs and has its own way, in spite of reason.

A man is told how foolish pride is; how much misery it brings him; how much unhappiness it causes other men; what a stirrer up of trouble, and what a producer of pain, it is. The reason is convinced, and says to pride, "You must humble yourself, Mischief-maker Pride"; but a sparrow might as well say to Mont Blanc, "Come down and play with me in the valley." It will not come down; and no more will pride humble itself in obedience to the command of reason.

Take another element around about which character is formed as a controlling power. Next to reason, men center their life on the *Will*. Gentlemen, do you know what the will is? I know what it is in its concrete form; but in its philosophy, in its faculty, what is it? You cannot give a definition of it. We all think that it is a directive force, and that is all. It does not generate feeling nor thought, it simply gives direction to something which existed beforehand. It cannot, therefore, be a center. It controls; but it only controls elements which have been developed for it to control. Any amount of effort has been put forth to make it a center; but see with what result. For instance, Professor Finney has made the will the grand center-point

of departure from selfish life to holy life. A man resolves, "By the grace of God, from this hour I will attempt to live as a Christian, and all my life shall flow in that direction." That is right, instrumentally; but men of strong understanding go on all their life long vainly attempting to build up Christian character on that doctrine. There is a latent doctrine, or an overt one, more or less concerned in it; but their character is formed on the will-power, as it is called; or it is the result of a series of determinations. And what do you make of them? Keen, active, executive, external men; but seldom men sweet, kindly, or full-souled. The crystallizing force is in the wrong place in such natures.

Another class of men attempt to subdue the whole nature around about *Veneration* as a central point; the sense of the magnitude, of the sublimity, of the authority, and of the grandeur of God. To veneration men are taught to attempt to submit everything which they have in them. You cannot make a rich nature in that way. It is not simply having a sense of nobility, and certainly it is not having an awful fear of what is noble, that is going to make one's nature rich.

There are two elements in religion. One is the restrictive element; and that is to be strong in proportion as men are nearly allied to their animal conditions. *Not to do wrong* is the lowest element of piety; but thousands of persons never reach any higher than that. Not to do wrong is their charter; and veneration, though it adds color to a character under certain circumstances, is, as a controlling center, substantially negative. It holds men back, restrains them, outwardly,

from disobedience or neglect; but restraining evil is the lowest form and type of influence. It is essentially allied to the animal condition.

The fruit of the Spirit is not negative, but positive. It is zeal in love; it is humility; it is mind-influence; it is disinterestedness; it is activity in doing good. As you rise from the animal toward the higher forms of men, the natures that are developed must be positive, and not negative. A man may have a garden with not a single bit of purslane in it from one end to the other, with not a single Canada thistle in it, with not a pigweed in it, with not a particle of dock in it, with not one single weed in it; a man may have a garden without one bad thing in it, — and without a good thing in it either, not a flower nor a fruit.

Now, to get your weeds out of the way is all right; but the weeds are to be got out in order that the ground may be occupied by positive blossoms and fruit. Not doing wrong is right; but it is a lower right. It is simply keeping under the weeds, as it were, of the disposition, while the real thing which a man should seek to do should be to produce positive virtues. But veneration does not produce these; and therefore it is not, when the soul moves in complex ways, fitted to be the master. It cannot drive the soul when its different faculties are all abroad, and are variously engaged. It takes another charioteer.

So neither can you center the character around about *Ideality*, — the artist feeling, — the taste feeling, — the sense of beauty and propriety. At certain stages of civilization men naturally make that pre-eminent; and, as I have said, it may become a powerful auxiliary to

the spiritual emotions, to a much larger extent than it is; but as a master-center, as a sovereign in the soul, it is feeble. As a restrainer, as a harmonizer, as a guide and governor, it is power indeed.

And that which is true of beauty is just as true of *Conscience*. We hear a great deal said about conscience; we hear a great deal said about the lack of conscience; and I believe that the foundations of character ought to be laid on conscience, just as the parlor and the nursery ought to be laid on oak sills; but I should as soon think of bringing up my children on planks and timbers in the parlor and nursery, laying their bare limbs down on these hard timbers and planks, as to attempt to make a rich, sweet, lovely, and lustrous character simply on conscience, which is, in its essential nature, cold, hard, condemnatory, and which comes into alliance with the malign passions much more naturally than with the benign elements. Its true chemical affinities are with the bottom, and not often with the top. At any rate, they have, by practice and habit, been made to ally themselves very much with the lower qualities of the mind. The soul will not own conscience as its master.

Neither will *Fear* nor *Superstition* do to be made the center about which to harmonize all the faculties of a man's soul. There is but one real center.

THE PAULINE CONCEPTION.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels [though I speak Syriac, and Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, yes, and the language of angels, — I think I see that in the text], and have not love, I am as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

If he had lived in our day, he would have said a bass-drum, which is very empty and very noisy.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy [aptitude of speech as well as foresight and disclosure], and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing; and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor [though I am unboundedly generous, — generosity being the sensibility of kindness when the object of suffering is visible to our senses; and liberality being the sense of kindness when the object of suffering is invisible; one having the elements of faith in it, and the other one sensuous elements], and though I give my body to be burned [in my zeal and fierce addiction to my own views of the truth], and have not love, I am nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth."

What a fruit-tree it is that bears all this fruit! What is the soul, that it can bring forth such things as are enumerated here? We are coming to the center according to the Pauline conception, which has love in it as the essential element. And see, when he comes to that how regnant he makes it! See how it has in it the prolificness of the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God! It "never faileth." It has in it immortality. Everything else is relative to it.

"But whether there be prophecies, they [belonging to this particular sphere, — belonging to time and circumstance] shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease [all

languages end with this world]; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. [All knowledge here is relative, suggestive, fugitive, and will perish. When you rise to see what is in the universal realm, all that you see here will seem like fleeting clouds and films.]

"For we know in part [this was said by a man who had been in the seventh heaven], and we prophesy in part. [Now Paul never would do for a theologian, acknowledging, as he did, that he knew only in fragments.] But when that which is perfect is come [when the full disclosure of men's manhood is made; when men have been educated on the earth, and have passed through the drill of life, and have gone through the battle, and won, and have ripened the Spirit of God in themselves, and have been lifted up out of limitations and hindrances], then that which is in part shall be done away."

Well, Paul, what then about that other state? If all that is so glorious and grand in this life is as nothing; if you say of that state, "Ah! I do not know any more about that than I knew about manhood when I was a child"; if you say, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things," and that is your representation of our present condition as compared with our future condition, then what must that other state be?

Now, we are children; and the inspired Pauline idea of heaven is, that our conception of it is as far from the glory of the reality, as the visions of a child are from the experience of his full manhood. He says, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face: now I know in part [I, the chiefest of the apostles, know but in spots and fragments]; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Very well, then, what part of us will remain? If you say that the understanding, the imagination, and all the thousand susceptibilities and sympathies of the soul are of the earth, earthy, shall we have our identity in the other sphere? Shall we know ourselves and other men? Yes; for there are certain qualities that constitute the great conditions of our personality which never perish, which do not change, which abide forever.

"Now abideth faith, hope, love."

Faith is that quality of a man's nature by which he comes into the realm of the invisible. Hope is that power by which his life goes forward beyond the present sphere, and is ever multiplying itself. And Love is greater than either of these.

WHY PAUL WAS RIGHT.

Now, look at such an interpretation, at such a charter of Christian character as that, and tell me if I am not warranted in saying that the only faculty of the soul which can be made the center of a man's character, and about which you can rank and harmonize all his other faculties, is the faculty of love. Look at it. What part of a man is it that refuses to submit to love where it exists?

The reason not only submits to it, but takes wider flights and clearer sights when it is in subordination to love. In many relations the reason cannot act except under the influence of the spirit of love.

Let reason undertake to judge hatred, and how imperfect is its judgment! Let reason attempt to adjudicate in the matter of pride, and how blinded is its

vision, how awry are its conclusions, how warped and partisan are its methods and influences!

Now, bring love into the soul, with its quietude, with its sweetness, with its harmonizing nature, and how does reason, like one coming out of a dream or a fit of insanity, see things as they are; and how does it move majestically as if it were a very creature of God!

Bring in veneration as a center, and how many powers of the soul are in insurrection! Then bring in love, and how everything in the soul is regulated and brought into a state of willing allegiance!

There is nothing in the constitution of man to which selfishness yields as it does to love. I do not know of anything that is more prettily selfish than a petted girl. She is the delight of father and mother. She is beautiful. She is accomplished. She is universally attractive. She is beloved by all who know her; and in a thousand little pretty ways she manifests her selfishness; and everybody tolerates it; and all the neighbors say, "She is utterly spoiled." But erelong, in the hour of disclosure, she finds her mate; she loves, and at once all her faults and failings begin, one after another, to dissolve, and go away, like snow in March. And, by and by, love watches the cradle. And this creature, that father had to serve, and mother had to serve, and the servants had to serve, and everybody had to serve, and toward whom ran in every stream of delight, being now a mother, cares nothing for parties and visits, — cares only to serve that little unrequiting child. And all night she will give up her sleep that she may watch over it if it be sick, and all day she will devote herself to it. And she is joyous

as a bird as she sits and sings to her darling in the cradle. And that which wrought so marvelous a change in her was love.

Now, there is nothing but the elemental power of love that can subdue all the other human faculties and make them revolve about it. And is not that the quality, in Jesus Christ, that Paul thought of when he said that there was no other controlling power, no other master-builder, no other architect, no other ground-plan, of the soul, like that which was in Christ Jesus, who came to show how he had loved the world? The charter of his coming was this: *God so loved the world that he gave his Son to suffer and die for it.* Love, that suffers; that bears all things; that strengthens weakness; that enlightens darkness; that restrains impetuosity; that humbles pride; that sweetens bitterness, yea, and acerbity; that takes from men all things rude, and gives them all things refined; that God sent into the world in the person of Jesus Christ, walking in beauty and authority and power, — Love said to all mankind, "Lay aside ceremonial sacrifices, and ordinances, and rules, and regulations, and conform your lives to this living pattern. Here is godhood, and therefore here is manhood. They are one and the same. So, build accordingly." And then what? Because you are of God, and because like attracts like, you will come irresistibly into the Divine communion and into the Divine presence.

THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Now, in your ministration you are men-builders, not in a general sense alone, but in the sense of the eternal

structure of character. And here I want to say that if any man thinks this kind of character can be built without Divine influence, I pity his ignorance. There are a great many men who say that they have all the power they want, and that they do not depend on God; but they are men who have not an idea of inward character, and of the necessity of reconstruction. I know what is in man; I have seen it, I have felt it, I have wrestled with it; and if one thing lies deeper in my thought and conviction than any other, it is this: that without the direct influx, the immediate and efficacious agency, of the Divine Spirit, it is in vain to attempt to reconstruct the character of a man, and bring out in him that manhood which is the true nature of mankind. You say, "No, the family helps, and the laws help"; but do you not know that the well-ordered family is the reflex influence of the Divine mind, and that just and wise laws in society have stored up in them the influence that has come from the down-shining of God upon men from generation to generation?

There is nothing more beautiful in Tyndall's writings than where he shows that all forces that are working in the world are solar forces. According to his theory, it is the sun that has given life to the vast trees and plants on the face of the earth. When, by heat from wood or coal, water is converted into steam, the force is a development of that which was stored up in the fuel, and which has come to itself in another form; and thus it is still the sun that does the work. So institutions store up Divine influences through years; and when they act they are indirect and secondary forms of Divine influence.

But the direct influence of the sun, — see how it works everywhere! Did you ever notice a tree growing against a wall? How gently it grows in the sunlight, that is so charming, so bland, so sweet! The birds, as with glittering wings they fly through the air, rejoice in the sunlight. The maiden walks forth from her sick-chamber, and thanks God for the sunlight. All the globe above our heads is a vast goblet, as it were, filled with the wine of sunlight. What is so harmless and sweet and beautiful as the sunlight? And yet, let the sunlight go on working on the willow, — the most accommodating of trees, that waves whichever way it is coaxed to wave, — and let the tree crowd against almost any wall, and it will push it down, whether it be of brick or stone. The simple influence of the sun in things that have life in them, — how mighty it is!

Soul-growth comes from the influence of the Divine sun, as really as vegetable growth comes from the influence of the visible sun. The growth of the soul comes by the shining of the Sun of Righteousness, in whose beams there is life and health and power to every soul that accepts it.

Here, then, we come to a ground which it seems to me is common, or may be common, both to those who are engaged in church work and those who are engaged in scientific work.

There is no doctrine in which men believe more at this day than in evolution, — development, going on and up, greater and greater unfolding. And men talk of going from nature toward civilization. But I say that civilization *is* nature, — the highest nature. I say

that the gospel of Christ is seeking the same thing which, however dimly and however blindly, science is making its way toward, — the disclosure of the power of God by which men grow; and it is coming to be understood that they grow by the very forces which are in them, harmonized around that soul-center love, which, when man is in his normal condition, controls everything that is in him.

THE PERFECT MAN.

This, then, is my estimate of sanctification. It is that state into which men come when every part of their nature has been developed, and when the faculties have been subordinated in their real gradations. When the faculties have all come to have affinities with the central controlling elements of Divine and human love in the soul; when that love is the center from which power goes out and stimulates every faculty, — then men are perfect.

When I look at "perfect" folks, my first thought is, always, "Are they more loving and more lovely than other folks?" I have seen many perfect people, or people that called themselves perfect, and have often wished that I felt as happy about being perfect as they did; but when I apply my test I cannot find perfect folks. There are those who think they are perfect because they do not commit faults, — that is, because they do not spill over. One reason why they do not spill over is because there is so little in them. Some people do not commit many faults, because there is not much to them. They consider themselves perfect, because they think their will is continually coincident

with the Divine will. They walk in that pleasant illusion. It is a dream. I have had such dreams, — though not when I was awake. I have had splendid times when I was asleep, and have waked up to find I had been dreaming, There are men who think their will is in accord with God's will, and who say, "Thy will be done," all the time, whispering it to themselves as they go around. They have had a comparatively quiet and pleasant life, and they think that they agree with God. I do, too, when he agrees with me. When things are about as I want them, I am always content that the will of God should be done; but when they are ordered the other way, then how is it?

Now, there are very few persons who have attained perfection, although there are many who suppose themselves to be perfect. Some persons are perfect in the same way that a man is obedient to his master who is prevented from running away from slavery by the cutting off of his legs. He will not run away, to be sure: but he is rendered less a man by the loss of his legs. A man may be prevented from stealing by cutting his hands off; but he is not so much a man after his hands are cut off as he was before. And this ascetic method of attempting to make men perfect by the mutilation of their faculties, is one which takes away much of their manhood.

My conception of a perfect man is one who is strong; who is full of energy; full of appetites and passions, and, therefore, of that wonderful force which is wrought by them, or which transforms itself into auxiliary forces; full of life; full of thought-power; full of æsthetic excellences; and, above all, full of that cen-

tral element of love to which all other influences are subordinated, and which is itself subordinate to God.

Now, give me a man like this. Where do you find him, — the man of liberty; the man of infinite largeness; the man that goes freely whither he will, up and down, all the faculties playing in harmony with the concert-pitch of the universe, which is love? Show me that perfect man. I have never seen him. I do not expect to see him on earth. It is my business to lead people toward that ideal; but it will remain an ideal in my day. None the less should we seek it, however. None the less should our ministry point to it. We are to preach to our people sanctification, — the arranging and harmonizing of all the faculties of the mind around about love, the sacred principle of the Divine nature; the all-governing principle of heaven; the principle that yet is to transmute men from the animal condition to the angelic, and make them fit companions of God.

THE PREACHER'S MISSION.

If this be the nature of your ministry, young gentlemen, you must be industrious. It will not do for you to spend your time with books alone. You must know *men*, in this day. It is not a small thing to be a minister of Christ. To be a mere priest is a very little thing. In the priestly office there is an appointed round of duties which can be easily performed. But to be a servant of souls; to be Christ's educator of men's interior nature; to stand in the place of the Lord Jesus, not in his majesty of power, but in his spirit, and to attempt to do in your sphere what Christ

by his example taught you to do; to know men; to understand their weaknesses; to perceive their sins, and to sympathize with them and sorrow for them on account of their infirmities, and bring the truth so to bear on them as to fill them up, each in the particular spot where he is deficient, and give proportion and harmony to every part; to preach so that sanctification shall be the end of your ministration, — this requires an industry, a perseverance, a faith, a self-denial, and an intensity of love, which is demanded by no other profession. If one is a servant of men for Christ's sake and for man's sake, there is nothing that he can aspire to which is so noble as the work which he has chosen. It is the highest calling to which a man can devote himself. And when you return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon your heads; when out of the heavenly gate come the multitudes whom your ministry has served, to welcome you, — in that hour it shall be revealed to you that he who serves the eternities by serving the souls of men and women, is greater than he who builds temples, or paints pictures, or governs empires, or secures to himself all the sweet and desirable things of earth.

Our high mission, our noble calling, is to build up souls, to perfect the Christian life, and to make manhood acceptable to God, and radiant in the sight of all men.

XII.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.

March 19, 1874.

PAUL, in arguing the supremacy of moral forces over physical, in one place speaks of God as having chosen the "things that are not to bring to naught the things that are," — by which we understand that he has chosen the forces that are above our natural senses. Supersensuous truths, truths of the other life, the invisible truths of man's spirituality, — these are stronger than the embattled forces of matter, whether in the household, or in society, or in the church. The subtle secret spring of highest power lies in the direction of those truths which can have no exposition in language or in form, but which dwell in the innermost consciousness or experience of men.

I purpose, this afternoon, to speak of the power which lies in the invisible, in respect to the truths of the future and man's relation to the future life; and of the uses which are to be made in your ministry of the great truth of continuous existence in the future spiritual, invisible state.

IMMORTALITY IN THE BIBLE.

Every one who reflects for a moment will be struck with the fact that this is a truth which never made its appearance in the Old Testament. It would be wrong to say that the doctrine of immortality was not understood by the old Jews. We can scarcely conceive of experiences such as David and other saints of old had in respect to Jehovah, of enthusiasm, love, and soul-prostration in connection with the idea of divinity, infinite and eternal, that did not carry with them morally, and in some way also inferentially, the doctrine of continued existence on the part of God's people; but in the Old Testament, so far as I know, never, in a single instance, is it more than hinted at, or even then used other than simply as a record of soul-experience. Not once is it there spoken of as a dynamical force; not once as a force in the realm of emotion. It does not clearly appear in the Old Testament in any way. It comes out in the later experiences of the Psalmist and the prophets; but nowhere as a cogent motive and persuasion to good, nor a dissuasion from evil. I do not remember a single instance in which continued existence is there made use of as a motive. Still less do I know of an instance in the Old Testament where the future penalties of ill-desert and misconduct, and the rewards of right conduct, are distinctly employed as an argument in favor of right living.

This is a fact that bears in a great many different directions which I shall not at all pursue.

When we turn to the New Testament, precisely the

antithesis is seen. It is steeped in the doctrine of continuous existence. The great after-life overhangs the New Testament as the heavens overhang the earth; and as the light which brings color down upon everything on the earth is derived from the overbrooding heavens, so in the New Testament, colors, proportions, and I had almost said moral qualities, are the result of this great truth of the continued existence of immortality, brought to life and light by Jesus Christ.

EFFECT OF IMMORTALITY ON THE MIND.

The importance of this truth I cannot overstate. I cannot overstate the importance of it to your ministry. I wish, in the first place, to discuss very briefly several relations of this truth to the different parts of the mind; then to sketch the Scriptural or structural method of presenting the future life; and then to consider, still more briefly, how you shall use this truth.

THE REASON.

I can hardly conceive of the reason as it existed or exists unleavened by the peculiar element of belief in continuous existence. There is a quality, there are ranges and habitudes, given by this faith, which the reason could not have had in any other way, even where it is exercised in relation to questions which are artificial, but which are discussed in the light of eternity and infinity. Even in those practices which obtained, faultily, I think, in times gone by, among the schoolmen (who were refined, and who discussed things as they related to the moral government of God, not in time, nor as to ethics, but as they stood associated with the

eternity of the past and the eternity of the future), this belief was the source of that strength which comes by projecting men's minds in such directions for long-continued periods. They gave a certain sort of richness, and a certain power of holding on, to the understanding. They gave to it also a certain subtleness and refinement which, I think, it can never have by any discussion of matter, nor by any consideration of the relations of men in this sphere. There is something in the idea of extension, whether it be of space or of time, which educates the reason, and gives it a breadth and quality which could be given by no other means.

THE IMAGINATION.

Consider the relations of immortality to the imagination. It may almost be said that a belief in immortality depends upon the existence of the imagination. Certainly it is by the imagination principally that we understand, not only that the worlds were made, but that they are to be unmade and made again. Whatever conception we have, of what the new heaven and the new earth are to be, comes through the imagination.

Faith is only a modification of the imagination. Whoever wrote the Hebrews defined faith to be "the evidence of things not seen."

A moral imagination takes into view the great invisible or unseen world; and here it is that the imagination becomes real, fruitful, strong, allying itself with memory and with present experiences for added material; and with discrimination and the power of hope for projection into the future.

The imagination in dealing with the great moral realm becomes an immense power; and it is to be noticed, in the structure of the Scriptures, that there is a great deal more instruction conveyed to the reason through the imagination than is conveyed to the imagination through the reason. In the infantile condition of every family the imagination deals in fictions, — fictions that are resemblances; and it oftentimes is the case, under such circumstances, that falsity is nearer the truth than fact. It is not unfrequently true that fiction is nearer to reality than reality is to itself, — that is to say, in the impression which is produced on the minds of men. If you were to make to a child a complex philosophical statement of an abstract problem of political economy, it would not be true to him; some phantasmagoric conception would be framed in his mind: whereas, if you were to make a picture for him, or tell him a fable which had not a word of truth in it, it might convey the idea to his mind better than the thing itself would.

So it is true that the imagination oftentimes has this power, as a formative influence; as a precursor of the reason; as a genius that nurses it and ministers to it.

The imagination offers one of the most instructive sides of the mind. It is one of the sides through which knowledge can best come to men; and it is employed throughout the Scriptures, eminently, as a vehicle for imparting knowledge. All the instruction which we get of higher spheres, of higher beings, and of our continued existence comes through this faculty.

THE CONSCIENCE.

The conception of the future and invisible life, and of progress in that life, materially affects also the conscience, making it strong and acute. But that is not all. Ethics whets the conscience, and practice drills it; but the sense of right and wrong is something larger than mere conventions and rules make it, and something larger than society makes it. It is in reality a part of the essential constitution of things, not being localized nor secularized, but having infinite scope.

Conscience has in it, and in its relations, something of sublimity, as well as of terror. There is such a thing as sublimity of joy and sublimity of fear; and it stands related to the elements of necessity, which, beginning and developing imperfectly here, go on in volume and momentum and power forever and forever. A large conscience has in it a juridical power which gives it breadth and potency. A small conscience, a nibbling, pinching conscience, is like a petty justice of the peace who thinks of his own dignity, and who is but a pygmy compared with a great statesman, or a high-minded king, or a judge built on the true pattern. The larger you can make your conscience, the broader, the grander, the more far-reaching, will be the character which will proceed from it. And, whatever its conventional training may be, if it grows up under the light of a coming eternity, it will take on noble proportions.

THE AFFECTIONS.

The same is true of the affections, on which a sense of continuous existence in the invisible realm has the same effect that the sunlight has on flowers, when it makes them blossom. It is easy to begin loving; but how hard it is to keep on! It is easy to begin, on our generous side, and see persons in ideal lights. Is there anything more beautiful in conduct than she who has entranced us? How admirable is the movement of her judgment and mind, as we stand adoring her! Every motion is grace, and every word is music. So it goes on, during all the period in which we worship. So long as we adore an object, that object is beautiful and bright to us. But by and by there comes a junction by which the two are made one; and they act together on a lower plane, where they are tempted to a thousand failings and errors of life, and where they are often overcome by temptation; and gradually there comes a sense of imperfection, of limitation in judgment, and of mistakes committed. Innumerable little trivialities occur They begin to see things differently. The question arises as to who shall be the trunk and who shall twine. All these things, and many more, come in to mar the picture which had been formed. Its bright colors are tarnished. The vision is lowered from that land out of which we thought nothing could be lowered, — the land of imagination and romance, — into the realm of actuality. And then, O, what alternations of long and weary wastes of common experience, with occasional refreshments! What sad and foggy days of indifference! How poor, oftentimes, is wedded

life, or life in conjunctions of friendship, because there is not one in ten thousand that is made good enough to keep present to the reason and the moral sense the aspects of aspiration of the higher nature.

Young gentlemen, if you want to love, love must be a thing that is immortal. It must be projected in the imagination far beyond the sphere of the body and the realm of time. You must learn to see the things which you love in their higher life, in their coming glory; and whatever repairs of love are made must needs be made by heavenly mechanics. If one could only train himself evermore to lift up against the background of immortality the things that are dear to him and that he would hold dear forever, and see them as they are to be, and imagine them as they shall be when God has passed the final finishing hand over them, how grand and glorious would affection become!

We do not bathe our hearts enough in the other life. We do not often enough send our friends, in imagination, into the ethereal heights where we shall see them, above the vulgar elements of secular life, in the altitudes and beatitudes of a growing and eternal love.

THIS WORLD, IN THE LIGHT OF IMMORTALITY.

Heaven is necessary to earth; and so a conception of continuous existence in the life to come is, by parity of reasoning, necessary to a right consideration of men on earth. It is almost impossible for men to project themselves very far in this world without finding that they are, on that account, losing the sympathy of men around about them. Elective affinities, therefore, take

the place of brotherhood. So men with the imagination and the reason highly cultivated look, if not with contempt, yet with coldness, on the lower rank of men who have no intellectual development, or no ideas in common with theirs, by which they can come into genial and intimate fellowship with them.

You will see in society that men tend to classify themselves all the while. Men of genius are strongly drawn toward men of genius. Men of common pursuits are powerfully drawn together. The community is perpetually stratifying itself. And there is no harm in this, provided the upper classes are perpetually a drawing-up force to the lower. It is because there is selfishness in this that there is harm in it.

There must be some way, therefore, in which men can make up for the deficiencies which exist in those about them, if they would feel a vivid, keen sense of interest in them. But when I think that men are to be hereafter not what they are here; when I think of the poor ignorant men who are inordinately developed in this faculty, and undeveloped in that; when I think of men who are overwrought in some directions, and underwrought in others; when I see men suppressed and kept down by their circumstances and by the tyranny of their fellow-men, I have to find hope for them in the future. When I see those creatures that seem to dodge between the animal and the man, so that we almost doubt where to rank them, I cannot look at them as they are, — certainly when I have conscious sensitiveness to purity, and refinement, and love, and beauty, and dignity, and amplitude of manhood, — and have a feeling of brotherhood toward them. It is

only when I say, looking at them by the help of imagination, "O, these are but the seeds, and these creatures shall yet be lifted up, and opened, and carried forward, and developed in the other life! I stand not before the flower, but before the seed or the bulb," — it is only then that I can look with complacency upon them.

What homelier things are there than gladiolus roots? But when, in the autumn or spring, I plant them in beds, I never look at them except with pleasure, because I think of those spikes which I shall erelong see covered with blossoms. I have seen them, and I therefore have faith that I shall see them again.

So I look upon the homeliest of human roots and bulbs, and descry in their future condition glorious attributes. The habit of associating them, not with the baseness of their present state, not with their material life, not with their secular experience, but with the invisible, with the power of the world to come, with the glory of God, resting upon their elevated natures, — this enables me, when I look upon them, to gain a conception of something that dignifies and beautifies even the present. I do not know how we can be Christian democrats unless we estimate men by what they are to be, and not by what they are. I cannot kiss unwashed folks, who are repulsive to me both in body and mind, except when I see the invisible that is in them and the future life to which they are coming. When I can see through the opaque that covers them, then I have that which destroys the disagreeableness of this mortal state.

A mother, hesitating, knows not why she is so drawn to that wretched, tottering, unshapen, disfigured crea-

ture; and in a moment she rushes to him. It is her son that now she sees, and not his hideous outward garb, but the inwardness of her old remembered love for him.

There is a power of love in the human soul that can extend itself to all ranks and conditions, and can see them as God sees them, — as they are to be, and not as they are; and the fellowship which is necessary among mankind demands this. If you sweep out of life the doctrine of after-existence by bringing in the doctrine of annihilation, or the cold philosophical declaration that there is no evidence of man's continuance beyond the grave, which is to us substantially the doctrine of man's non-existence in a world to come, — if you do this you might as well spread sackcloth over the heavens and expect agriculture and horticulture to go on in the earth, as to expect under such circumstances to have life go on with its amenities, sweetnesses, and inspirations.

The whole conception of manhood, as it has existed since the prevalence of Christianity; the conception of the best parts of our nature; the conception of the subtlest elements of admiration, and reverence, and trust in men, — that conception is founded not simply on what a man is, but on what he is to be.

We have to take men as we eat fish. We cannot eat fish as they are when they are caught. They must be scaled, the head must be taken off, the fins must be removed, the tail must be cut off, the bones must be taken out; and what is left is all that is really good.

We have to take a man with allowances here and

there: and when you conceive of a man with all his faults taken away; when you sit with a critical and cynical eye, and analyze him, saying, "So much good for reason, so much for moral sense, so much for the affections, so much for comely appearance, and so much for graceful manners, the rest is good for nothing"; — when thus you take off a man's scales and fins, and everything external, there is not a great deal left of him, — only just a mouthful.

But when you begin the other process, — that of synthesis; when you take the faulty faculty, and build it up without blemish, without spot, without wrinkle; when you take the imagination and eclaircize it, and give it horizon; when you take the moral sense, and give it health and tone and power; when you look at men, and habituate yourself to look at them in their heavenly aspects, and think what they are to be in the far future, — you will find that it will draw you nearer to them. It will make friendship dearer and more sacred to you. It will make the human race seem more to you than mere aphides or vermin, groping upon the face of the earth. But otherwise they seem very insignificant.

Why, to-day, the whole continent of Africa would hardly make one single full-grown man, with qualities such as those which enter into manhood with us. O, how mean and cheap a man is, judged of by what he appears to be in many parts of this world! A million men might be slaughtered in China to-day, and the world would not lose an idea or a function. As the sheep of the field, perishing, leave nothing to be missed, so there are nations that are of such little

worth that if they were annihilated the world would miss nothing.

I cannot bear to think that the old world is carrying such a worthless burden; and I gain relief from the anguish of the thought by turning to the life and example and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. He gives us assurance that the future of mankind will be different from their present condition. In the light of the New Testament men mount up; they bud; they blossom; they bear fruit; and why should we not give them the advantage of the disclosures which have been made, through the Saviour, of their state in the world to come? Why should we not couple ourselves with our race, not by cold scientific notions of fact, but by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by the revelation of Scripture, and by that blessed power by which faith — the evidence of things not seen — acts.

THE BIBLE VIEW OF THE FUTURE.

The other life is presented to us in Scripture both in light and in shadow. It has its dark side and it has its bright side. The New Testament, however, uses the bright side in immense disproportion to the dark, — as it should. The other life is a sphere in which men reap what they sow in this. If they sow to the flesh they reap corruption. The world to come is a land where the natural results of wrong-doing work themselves out.

This view of the future inspires fear and sadness. Fear always works toward repression. It has no aspiration in it. Its tendency is to drag one downward toward the flesh. But it is indispensable in the early

periods of national existence or human life. It cannot be dispensed with in the lower stages of the development of mankind. And as every man, in his personal experience, passes through what is equivalent to the savage condition of the race itself; as every child is at first a beast, an animal merely, and rises up through all the stages of unfolding into its own little round, as the race has already done in its larger round; so there is a necessity that there should be a certain amount of fear to hold men back, to restrain them, and to teach them to adapt means to ends. We are not, therefore, to omit or to shrink from such delineations of the dark side of continuous existence in the world to come, as shall excite in men necessary fear. But, after all, while our Master, more than any other writer or teacher of the New Testament, dealt with the sterner features of continued existence, the characteristic element of his instruction is hope, as a power of salvation. It is the conception of a continued life of joy, it is the vision of future blessedness, that gives to the New Testament its peculiar and distinctive color.

ADMINISTRATION OF HOPE AND FEAR.

What proportion of fear or of hope you are to employ in your preaching you cannot determine by any mathematical rule. If I were to ask a physician, "What proportion of diluents or of astringents ought one to employ in his medical practice?" he would laugh at me, and say, "That depends upon the organization of the patient, and upon what his disease is." You cannot say that a physician ought to use diluents twice where he uses astringents once; or that he ought

to use astringents five times where he uses diluents twice. The amount of each to be used will vary continuously according to circumstances. And the idea of attempting to preach doctrines in given proportions, judged of by exact relations, saying, "This, being the great central view, must be preached just so much; and that is a collateral view, and must be preached so much," — the idea of preaching thus according to an imaginary scheme is absurd, preposterous. You are to preach at one time one view, and at another time another view, according to their relations to what you have to do upon the human mind.

How often shall I prune my vines? That depends upon how many vines I have, upon their particular kind, upon what soil they are in, upon whether they grow rampantly or not, and upon what they need. Frequently we prune vines by pinching them in, instead of using the knife, to make them grow right.

And so it is in regard to the great truths of hope and fear. We are to administer them with reference to the mind-qualities with which we have to deal, and with reference to the state or condition of those mind-qualities, in each particular parish; and respecting these things every man of you must judge for himself.

PICTURES OF HEAVEN.

The Scriptural revelation of the life that is to come is pictorial, and and not literal. That there are elements in it which will be found to have been true of our earthly experience there can be no doubt; still, the structural method of the New Testament in revealing our future life is one which addresses itself to us through

our imagination, through our reason, through our affections, and through our sentiments. It is a sublime auroral fresco. Of course, the best things, both negative and positive, were taken to reveal the heavenly land. The things which men on earth feel to be the greatest grievances, — the lash, the dungeon, the sword, disease, poverty, over-matched toil, unendurable weakness, fatigue, disappointments, sorrows, the wrenching off of branches, the flowing of tears in grief, deeply wounded affections, — these things one who lives long learns to recognize. They are peculiarities belonging to this lower sphere. They are the negatives by which heaven is described as a place where men never tire; where there is no night; where no tears are shed; where sickness does not come; where nothing molests or makes afraid. If fear were taken away from the myriads of earth, what a translation it would be! A land without fear, — what a land that must be! Such negatives are very significant.

But the positives are also very signficant. Things in their best estate are used to represent heaven. The noblest affections, carried up to the point of effluence or ecstasy, are employed for this purpose; and although a singing man might imagine that heaven was a magnificent class of singers standing about the throne and singing the best hymns out of the best collections, yet if you look at in its larger and better aspects, heaven is that state in which the human affections are carried up to their highest condition, and where they act with spontaneity and force, forever pouring themselves out in ecstasy. This is the larger meaning of praise and worship, — the overflow of vital souls in a

land without fatigue, under the inspiration of the Divine presence, where they can bear perpetual rapture, as they cannot bear it in the physical body.

We are to use the Bible just as it is, in so far as it does us any good. I confess that when it talks to me about kings with crowns on their heads, I wink and go on. I do not care about kings. That figure is without force in democratic communities. If *king* means anything to you, it is because you place an artificial importance upon it. It is because you have poured cologne-water on it, which has a fragrance that does not belong to the word itself. Once, kings fascinated the imagination of the world; and to say to the Jews that they were to be kings and priests to God was to set their imaginations on fire; but to tell me that I shall ever be a priest in heaven brings no light and no joy to my mind. It makes the future very stiff and very disagreeable to my conception.

It is not until, catching the *structural genius* of the New Testament, — its mode of representation, — we take the best things which have been revealed to men, the noblest traits which Christianity has brought out, the most royal experiences which have been known to human nature, and put them together and call them heaven, that we shall come to a conception of the future which shall be satisfying to our souls. And we have a right to make our heaven thus, so that it shall shine with radiance, and come to us with a sense of personality: so God permits us to make our heaven for ourselves. Our heaven is a picture which we paint by our imagination, and into which we put what is most precious in this world, all the while remembering

that it is but a faint representation of the heaven to which we are going.

INDIVIDUAL CONCEPTIONS OF HEAVEN.

One impression of heaven is that it is a good place to escape to, out of hell; and in that sense it is a kind of insurance office where a man gets his policy with which he hopes to get through this world safely.

But as you go on, it becomes a matter of sentiment, and persons begin to transfer those things which are most precious to them here — the heart's undying treasures — to that vital heaven which every man must make for himself. By and by, when persons sink under the burdens of life, and their powers begin to fail, and God's love takes on the form of discipline, and the yoke galls their neck, they begin to feel their scholarship; they begin to realize that they are the disciples of the Sufferer; that through suffering they are to attain glory and immortality. Suffering begins to interpret to them the heavenly kingdom.

O, what a dry and arid place it has been to many and many a one until God struck the soul through father, through mother, through some brother or some sister! Then heaven grew populous to them, as it grows populous to you, as you send there one and another that you have loved.

O, how many times have men — great, strong, stalwart men — come to the gate, and found it fastened by a stone which they could not roll away themselves, and which nobody could roll away for them, until a little child from out of the cradle, with its feeble hands was strong enough to roll it away, and open the

gate, and let them look into heaven! How many men have looked in to find their children, and beheld for the first time the light and glory of the other life!

Christian friends, I, who have sent five dear ones there, have come to realize the truth of the words, "A child shall lead them." My departed children have led me to them.

And so we build heaven out of our joys, out of our sufferings, out of our griefs, out of our experiences, taking the best and noblest things, and arranging them so that they shall fill the imagination, and by the imagination warm the heart, and by the heart illumine the understanding. Thus we construct our heaven to suit our personality, always bearing in mind that what we imagine is but the seed-form of what the reality shall be. We know that our conceptions of heaven come short of what it actually is. We know that it shall be better than we imagine it to be. We know that love shall be grander, that joy shall be more wondrous, and that worship shall be more transcendent, than anything that we think of. It is true, as the Apostle said, to whom these things had been revealed, that eye hath not seen, that ear hath not heard, and that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath reserved for those that love him. To stand in the presence of God, to love God as I love my friends, to be as familiar with him as I am with them, and to talk with him, — these are things which cannot be comprehended by us in this world.

I walk with men of science, and am associated with them; but is not God the greatest Scientist? I listen

to men of transcendent eloquence; but is not he the greatest Speaker? I behold with delight the works of superior artists; but is not he the primal Artist, and the grandest? Who is there among his infinite creatures than whom he does not stand infinitely larger in power and wisdom and glory? And I am his; he is mine; and there shall be a familiarity in my intercourse with him which you cannot take away from love. Such is my heaven.

A CONTINUOUS SENSE OF THE INFINITE.

Now, in your ministration you should deal largely with this great realm of the invisible, of the infinite, of the illimitable, and of the absolute. These are the elements which a man needs to take him farthest away from the limitations and narrowness to which he is subject by reason of his animal nature. You are born animals with an undeveloped spirit; and what you need in all your life is that which shall carry up the higher part of your nature, and make it more and more floriferous, more and more beautiful. This is done by opening the whole upper air and realm to your interior being. And as it is with you, so it must be with your people.

While, then, you preach topically on the subject of heaven or of hell; while you preach formal and stated sermons in respect to the great hereafter, — the great above-all and around-all and under-all, — there ought to be something more than that. Preaching the glories of the other life should form, constantly, a part of your ministry; but, besides, you should be so full of it that wherever you go you shall carry with you unconsciously

the breath of the other world. I know that a man has been through my garden if he walks from it into my house, by the smell of his raiment, although I have not seen him there, and have not been told that he has been there. I can tell what part of the garden he has been in. I know my heliotropes; and if he has walked through that avenue along which they grow, and then has come into my presence, he brings something of their fragrance with him, and I discern it.

Now, your soul should dwell in those higher conceptions and loftier realms which belong to the other life, so that there should be the smell of heaven upon your raiment, if I may so say; so that those who come in contact with you shall have a sense of the infinite life that is to be hereafter.

In the lectures which I have given you, I have, with a purpose, emphasized the necessity of the study of mind, of mental philosophy in its living and practical forms. I have dwelt a great deal in analysis. I have spoken many things to show you how to preach to the human mind. But now, your special danger will be that you will become mere analysts of worldly things; that you will become specialists in morality and in ethics.

There was a right good reason why the old preachers were afraid to preach morals: not that they are of no value; but that a man who gives himself largely to preaching moral and ethical relations is apt to lose that scope and power which comes from those relations which are broader and higher. Abiding in the infinite and eternal prepares one to bring to his task of preaching something more than analytical power and secular

narrowness. If you live much in the realm of the spiritual, you have the counterpoise of that part of your mind which allies you to the physical and material. You will need to have the spirit of Christ abiding in your souls in order that you may be what you were ordained to be, consolers and comforters.

THE JOY OF BRINGING COMFORT.

My dear friends, I hope to have an inheritance in heaven, — but not as pay for what I have done in this world. I have had my pay as I have gone along. It has not been in any sense of complacency as to eloquence, or orthodoxy, or anything of that sort; it has been that God, in his providence, gave me a temperament and a training which led me to inspire men with courage, with hope, and with consolation; and I have been blessed to an unusual extent as a comforter. There is nothing sweeter to me, in this world, than to meet one and another, as I do continually, who say, "I never could have gone through my business troubles, Mr. Beecher, but for your comforting preaching"; or, "When sorrow came into my household, my heart was broken; and I owe it to you that I was lifted, as by the voice of angels, into a realm of peace." I do not care so much for praises, — provided I have them; I do not care so much for the approbation of men, — though that is a great deal; but the sense that God has enabled me to help a soul in its extremity, to find men in their Gethsemanes and comfort them, — this I care a great deal for. If I should die to-morrow, you could not take it from me. I have lived, and what I have done will stand. I have

lived; and whether my future should be in heaven or in hell, the fact that I have been an instrument of comfort and upbuilding to men cannot be obliterated. I have my reward for that in the joy which comes from the consciousness that I have been permitted to carry the balm of consolation to those who were in trouble. You cannot stop up a perennial fountain.

Now, you must preach so that men who are under burdens and cares shall from your preaching derive stimulus and hope, by which they are helped to go through their various appointed allotments, so that when they come to trouble they will think of you; so that when they come to anguishful experiences you shall be one who can give an upward direction to their minds, whereby they shall seek outside of themselves for their sources of strength and support. The general drift and tendency of your preaching should be such as to lead men to the fountain of comfort, in the bosom of the Great Infinite. Earth does not grow the herb of consolation. It is a heavenly plant. It blooms near the Throne. It is a part of the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of nations.

THE PREACHER'S REFUGE.

And you will need these views, dear brethren, for your own sake as well as for your people, — although the ministry is the noblest profession. To be a minister of the gospel, in the true sense of the term, is to be a laborer in the most glorious sphere on earth. And I think it unworthy for ministers to talk about their cares and anxieties and burdens and responsibilities. Ministers do not have as many cares and anxieties as

lawyers and doctors who are worthy of their professions. The ministry is one of the cleanest of horticultural professions. Men in the ministry deal with dirt, to be sure; but it is dirt that brings out flowers all the while.

And yet you will often find the need of supernal comfort in your life-work. Sometimes, in the discharge of your duties, you will find that virtue has gone out of you, when you are obliged, by your sympathy, to take one soul and another and carry them over the flood. It will excite and exhaust you. And you will often be depressed by the sense of being fruitless. And you will sometimes be obliged to stop in the way, from sickness or weakness, when your soul is full of zeal, and see others pass by you in the race.

I have seen, among a cluster of boys that were all exhilaration and power, a little crippled boy, standing and looking on wistfully amidst the whirl and excitement about him.

So, sometimes, you will stand and witness the power and victory of others, and feel pain that by reason of weakness you are deprived of the privilege of joining in the struggle. And there will be a thousand trials, of bodily strength, of mental strain, of perplexities and discouragements and failures, and temptations and bereavements, — not only the ordinary lot of man, but trials peculiar to your profession and your work. You will have enough to trouble you in one way and another.

And let me tell you, *fly up!* Do not stay down here where troubles dwell. Go above the dust that rises from the ground, and above the thunder of earthly

noises. Betake yourselves to the realm of eternal peace, to the refuge of God's heart, to the love of Christ's bosom, to the apartment of God's house which the Saviour went before to prepare for you. Escape from your troubles to your eternal home. Do not whine. Do not complain. Do not even think complaint. For, by sorrow and trouble God is preparing you for power and influence. And many of you with feeble tongue will have an abler administration hereafter than you have here. Many of you with feeble hands will hold a scepter that you cannot now hold.

Live for the other life. Endure as seeing Him who is invisible; work by faith; work by hope; work by love; work by courage; work by trust; work by the sweet side of your mind; and so, be like Christ, until you dwell with him.

END OF VOLUME III.

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